

Circuit Rider



A monthly publication of the First United Methodist Church of Glendale

A Time of Contrasts

As I write this over the last several days, our weather has been an amazing study in contrasts. This morning, when I came to the office, it was cloudy to the point that I brought my umbrella, and it was obvious that rain had occurred either during the night or earlier in the morning. And yet by the afternoon, it was warm and sunny, not a cloud to be seen. And the same was true a couple of days ago. From one hour to the next, looking out the office window, the sky could change completely.

That got me thinking. If you can say anything about the times we're living in, you can say we're living in a time of profound contrasts. That's certainly true for the events of the last several weeks. As I watched the ceremonies of the inauguration on Wednesday, I couldn't help but reflect on the

So we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?" Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.
—Hebrews 13:6, 8

contrast of what had taken place in the same location, on the steps of the Capitol, just two weeks earlier. And I was grateful, as I heard comments from leaders of both parties, that there is renewed interest in and hope for unity, on hearing each other's concerns, and working together for the good of all. I know our Savior would encourage us to follow that path, as he identified one of the two greatest commandments as "Loving our neighbors as ourselves."

There are other contrasts as well. As the COVID pandemic continues, there's finally light at the end of the tunnel. Vaccines are starting to be distributed, and by the time you read this, some of our members may have already received the first injection,

if not both. I strongly encourage all of our church family to get the vaccine when it becomes available for you; I will be doing the same. The coming of the vaccine means that the pandemic will finally be under control, and the day when our church family can be together again is drawing closer at last. However, in great contrast, several weeks ago, the State of Arizona had the greatest increase of COVID cases in the world, Maricopa County had some of the highest rates of infections in the state, and virtually all medical authorities are predicting that the pandemic will increase even further before it begins to recede. The vaccine has brought us hope, and we anticipate the day when we can enjoy worship and fellowship in person.

(Continued on page 3)



First United Methodist Church

7102 N. 58th Drive • Glendale, AZ 85301

Phone: 623.939.1409 • Fax: 623.236.9284

www.glendalefirstumc.com

Current Office Hours:

Tuesday and Thursday 9:00 am—3:00 pm

Rev. A. Tom Jelinek, Pastor

Brad Riner Assistance Office Applies for From the Heart Grant

Elizabeth Leggett, our Director of Outreach, is always on the lookout for the opportunity to apply for grants (large and small) to support the work of the Brad Riner Assistance Office. One of those grants is “From the Heart,” a unique partnership of Glendale residents, the city of Glendale and local community agencies. Last year, we received \$7,500 from this program, which is designated to help Glendale residents pay utility bills such as water bills and electric bills. The Riner Office is one of just few agencies that help households with water bills. We are in the process of applying to this program now, so it seems like a good time to highlight how From the Heart works:

Since From The Heart began in 1997, more than \$2.25 million has been raised and distributed to non-profit agencies serving Glendale residents. Every From the Heart dollar stays in our community to support social service agencies that serve Glendale residents. From The Heart’s mission is to promote the positive development of youth, strengthen the capabilities of families and assist residents in addressing crisis needs by supplementing the resources of existing community agencies.

About 15 percent of Glendale utility customers already add a \$2 From the Heart contribution to their monthly city utility bill payments. Surepay customers also contribute to the program. Others make their donations by mailing or bringing a check or money order in any amount made out to From the Heart to the City of Glendale’s Customer Service Office on the first floor of the City Hall Complex located at 5850 West Glendale Avenue, Glendale, Arizona 85301.

Making a From the Heart donation is easy. Glendale utility customers can add \$2 to their monthly utility bill payments. If you don't receive a utility bill, or you want to donate more than \$2 per month, you can mail or bring a check or money order made out to From the Heart in any dollar amount to the City of Glendale, Customer Service Office, 5850 W. Glendale Avenue, 1st Floor, Glendale, AZ, 85301.



For Our Youth...

Glendale First Youth now have a Facebook page! It is linked to our church’s Facebook page, and you can find it by searching Glendale First Youth Group. This social media outlet will allow for parents and youth to see upcoming events, what’s going on in our church life, as well as stay connected with each other!

On Saturday January 30, we are meeting at Christ Community in Avondale at 9:00 am for a multi-church youth group mission where we will be building ash shifters. The space we will be meeting is outside, so we can continue to social distance but still be close to friends! Hope to see you there!

—Sarah Cushman, Youth Director

A Time of Contrasts

(Continued from page 1)

But for the time being, I hope we can hang in there, and keep up our precautions of masks, distancing, and hand washing, for a little while longer.

However, whatever the contrasts, however great the changes we experience, we can be assured that our God is still with us, every step of the way. Even in the very real challenges of an ongoing and still growing pandemic, our God and Savior promises us, "I will be with you always, to the very end of the age." There's nothing in our lives, or in all of creation, that can separate us from God, or change God's unconditional love for us. In all times, even in these, we can go forward with the assurance that we need not fear; God is with us, always has been, and always will be. God and God's love are unchanging. In this time of contrasting opposites, and many encumbrances and obstacles, let's always remember God's constant love. And, with confidence, let's share the reassuring good news of that love with others.

In Christ's Service,
Tom Jelinek, Pastor

Worship Schedule for February 2021

February 7 – Fifth Sunday After Epiphany

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 9:16-23

Sermon: *Be It and They Will Come*

February 14 – Transfiguration Sunday

Scripture: Mark 9:2-9

Sermon: *Sharing the Story*

February 17 – Ash Wednesday

Scripture: Joel 2:12-17

Sermon: *Even Now*

February 21 – First Sunday in Lent

Scripture: Genesis 9:8-17, Mark 1:9-15

Sermon: *One Good Turn*

February 28 – Second Sunday in Lent

Scripture: Mark 8:31-38

Sermon: *In Training*

Tackle Hunger

It's that time of year again—time for the Souper Bowl! As we watch two teams play their hardest to try and win the biggest game of the season, let's remember those who may not have a bowl of soup to eat during this time. The Youth Group are asking for the congregation to *Be Bigger than the Bowl!*

Let's make the big game into a Souper Bowl! The youth are doing an online fundraising this year, hoping to raise money for the food pantry at the Brad Riner Assistance Office!

To join in and donate, please visit:

<https://map.tacklehunger.org/donate/fumcyouth>

We appreciate any support given and are excited to continue doing this tradition even though we are not able to meet in person!



Ash Wednesday (February 17, 2021) is an important day in the church calendar. It marks the beginning of Lent, a season of preparation for the celebration of Easter. This holy day is not a holiday from work, school, or most other obligations, so if we are not intentional in our observance it is likely to resemble any ordinary Wednesday, especially during the pandemic. Below are some ideas to mark Ash Wednesday at home:

Abstain or Fast

"Giving something up for Lent" is a common practice. Often, we give up a favorite food or try to kick a bad habit during Lent. Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, is when this begins, but don't confine yourself to food or habits. Can you abstain from complaining for Ash Wednesday? What about defensive attitudes, fear, or anxiety? When negative attitudes begin to take hold of your day, pause for prayer.

Pray

Maybe you can pray for drivers of vehicles, especially those transporting essential items. Pray for doctors and nurses. Pray for our church. Lift up the trash collector and mail carrier. Offer short prayers throughout the day—tell God your worries, and thank Him for your blessings.

Create

Some of us reflect and pray best when our hands are busy. Sew or do needlework. Write a devotion. Gather supplies to create a work of art. As you create, give thanks to our Creator, who longs to be in relationship with us.

Be Still

You may find meaning in stillness. Light a candle and pause before the presence of God. Do some mindful yoga, or enjoy a cup of coffee outdoors. Listen for the voice of God.

Clean

Ash Wednesday is a good day to get a jump on your spring cleaning. Spend half an hour with the junk drawer, closet, or organizing the files on your computer. Remember Psalm 51:10, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."

Forgive

This is a wonderful day to forgive one another. Jesus taught us to pray, "Forgive us for the ways we have wronged you, just as we also forgive those who have wronged us." (Matthew 6:12)

Give

Another way to mark Ash Wednesday is to give. You can give an offering to our church through our website, glendalefirst.com. Maybe give to COVID-related projects, or disaster agencies such as UMCOR or the American Red Cross.



Update from the Finance Subcommittee

The 2020 financial numbers are audited and finalized, so let's take a look back at the year from a financial perspective. Surprisingly, but with the help of a federal loan, the church did very well. We paid all of our bills including our apportionments and ended the year with a positive bank balance. A positive balance is always a good thing. So here are the overall figures for the church.

Total income for the church for all purposes was \$417,307 (I'm rounding all numbers to the nearest dollar). Nearly all of that was generously donated by our members and friends. During a year of the pandemic, this shows an incredible, faithful commitment to the continuation of our church and its mission. The money is split into two main categories: the general fund and the restricted funds. The general fund has a budget; the restricted funds generally do not. So when I talk about the budget know that I'm always talking about the budget for the general fund. In 2020, the general fund income was \$335,192, and the restricted funds received \$82,115.



Let's focus on the restricted funds for a moment. There are 21 restricted funds from the Brick by Brick Fund to the Youth Fund. These funds are restricted in the sense the money in these funds can be spent only on specific (i.e., restricted) purposes. Each of these funds have a person or group which controls the spending. For example, the trustees control the Capital Improvements Fund, and the Riner Administrator controls the Riner Fund. Some funds are orphaned such as the Centennial Fund since the Centennial committee disbanded after the 125-year celebration. These orphan funds fall under the purview of the Finance Committee, although we are aware we need to spend money only when it furthers the purpose of the fund. The restricted funds had expenses of only \$66,547 and a goodly portion of the savings went into the Capital Fund, which was sorely depleted in 2019.

Since we have not been meeting in-person, our general fund expenses are a bit lower than last year. Although, as I mentioned last month, the big three categories (salaries, maintenance and utilities, and apportionments) did not see reductions. Expenses for the general fund totaled \$320,162. Doing the math, you can see we had a positive balance of \$15,030. However, our positive balance can be attributed to the Payroll Protection Loan which the church received last April in the amount of \$35,480. Since we used the loan to pay salaries, we do not have to pay it back. The loan/grant thus allowed us to end the year with a positive balance instead of a negative one. Still, combined with the carryover from 2019 into 2020, we are starting off 2021 with a healthy balance of \$21,906.

Needless to say, 2021 remains challenging. The pandemic continues despite the vaccine, and we are still meeting remotely. No new loans are anticipated. But with God's help, we will manage and come out of the pandemic stronger than before. May God continue to guide and bless our church.

—David Mosley, Finance Subcommittee Chair

District Training for Local Church Administrative Committees

In the first months of the year, people who have been elected to local church leadership begin their new ministry roles. The Desert Southwest Conference recognizes the importance of these church leaders and the importance of training them on the disciplinary duties of the local church administrative committees. These committees include **Trustees, Finance, Staff Parish Relations, and the Leadership Team or Church Council**. In the past, these training seminars have taken place in-person at each district. This year, this training is being offered through webinars, and the district training that was advertised for January 30, 2021 has been postponed.

These webinars, and a collection of handout materials to go with them, are available on the Desert Southwest Conference webpage under the DSC University Trainings and Events button or at this link: <https://dscumc.org/initiative/training/>. There are webinars and materials for the Board of Trustees, Finance Committees, Leadership Team/Church Councils, and Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committees. They can be viewed at any time, any place. Some committees may want to watch segments together and discuss them in the first meetings of the year. Other committees may ask their members to view them separately and perhaps have a discussion with the pastor about how they will work in that specific church's setting. The District Superintendents are available to answer any questions or if a church would like further instruction.

God is a generous God who gifts our churches with people from all kinds of backgrounds with different kinds of talents and skills. Inviting them into ministry and equipping them with the knowledge they need to honor their commitments is part of our work in making disciples. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul uses the human body as a metaphor for the church and how each part is valued for its contribution. The ministry of these administrative committees are important ministries to the church. They act to resource and support the rest of the work of the church that helps people grow closer to Christ, nurtures them to be his disciples and gives them opportunities to make Christ known in the community beyond the church.

–Rev. N. Susan Brims, East District Superintendent

–Rev. Dan Morley, North District Superintendent

–Rev. Nancy Cushman, West District Superintendent

–Rev. Matt Ashley, South District Superintendent



Calling for submissions to our online Tuesday devotions, "Good Words for Tough Times." Please email rebecca@glendalefirstumc.com. Thank you!



Each year, the West District prays for all the churches in its jurisdiction for one month. In February, please pray for:

- **Ajo Federated Church**
- **Calvary UMC, Phoenix**
- **Chino Valley UMC**
- **Christ Community UMC, Avondale**

Downtown Glendale Celebrates Friendship at the Annual Galentine's Day

It is all about the love between friends as Historic Downtown Glendale presents Galentine's Day on **Saturday, Feb. 13, 2021 from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm** with a fun day of activities to gather your best girlfriends together to celebrate the value of friendships.

The locally-owned businesses in the Catlin Court and Old Towne shopping districts have created this fun-filled day to celebrate the treasured love between women and have planned a perfect day for you and your best friends. There will be fun things to do along the way including make and take activities, fun photo ops, lovely gift ideas at the locally-owned unique boutiques and specialty shops and sweet treats to satisfy your sweet tooth at the iconic eateries. You can also follow the Historic Downtown Glendale Charm Trail to fill a bracelet with beautiful charms.

New this year, follow the "Joy Journey" to pick up happy, heartfelt and joyful message cards. Start your Galentine's Day journey at the Arizona Information Center located at Memory Lane Trinkets and Treasures (5836 W Palmyra Ave) to pick up the activity list and walking map.

Galentine's Day is presented by the Historic Downtown Glendale Merchants Association, a merchant driven organization which stimulates, enhances, and sustains the economic vitality and customer experience of the Historic Downtown Glendale Shopping and Dining District.

For more information, check out:
VisitDowntownGlendale.com

or follow us at :

[Facebook.com/HistoricGlendale](https://www.facebook.com/HistoricGlendale)

Movies by Moonlight
DRIVE-IN
Date Nights!

Feb 12
GREASE

Feb 13
the Wedding Singer

Friday, February 12
Grease (PG)

Saturday, February 13
The Wedding Singer (PG13)

FREE!
Movies start at 7pm
Lot opens at 5:30 pm

Downtown Glendale
Lot on 57th Ave. & Glenn Dr.

2 Rounds of Car Bingo,
Beginning at 6:30pm
Bring a pen or marker.

No Concessions
Plan ahead and grab takeout from your favorite Glendale restaurant!

Audio through FM Radio
Listen on your car radio or bring a portable to save your cars battery.

Must Remain in Your Car
Except to Use the Restroom
You must wear a mask when going to the restroom.

Space is Limited
Register to reserve a spot.

Free Treats Included for Each Guest!

For more info please visit www.glendaleaz.com/events



SEE HOW YOU CAN TACKLE HUNGER IN OUR COMMUNITY ON PAGE 3

Deadline for the next issue is February 17. Your items for the newsletter should be submitted to the church office by 3:00 pm. email: rebecca@glendalefirstumc.com fax: 623.236.9284

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First United Methodist Church
7102 North 58th Drive
Glendale, AZ 85301-2434
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