

# ***THE VALLEY VOICE***

**VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH December 2023**



## **Advent**

*Submitted by: Pastor Craig*

Green Valley in 2023 makes it difficult to live in Advent! When days in November still reached 92 degrees; when war and threats of war in Ukraine, Israel and Palestine, in Syria; within our own government; when our Associate pastor who has held us up before GOD is leaving our employ for well-deserved retirement... hoping for the birth of the Son of GOD, praying for peace, hoping for the new year, all become very hard. Actually, hard times are when our faith in the Trinity becomes more real than ever before!

Human nature has encouraged us to dumb down our faith so much as to take what we believe for granted. Rather than living as if We are the Church. We are the Body of Christ in this time and place; we have gone to Church. Instead of Worshipping GOD in Divine Worship on the LORD's Day; we have Worshipped. Instead of our Living in the ADVENT of The Messiah, the ADVENT of Christ, the ADVENT of EMMANUEL where GOD and humanity are One; we set up the tree and light candles on an Advent wreath.

This year in our lives especially, when secular life is depressing, we need our faith in GOD to Hope and Believe. We cannot physically go to Bethlehem this year, but those who have been (I was in 2015) can share their witness of the place that Mary gave birth to Emmanuel. Rather than focusing on "A White Christmas," we can realize that the Shepherds were keeping watch over their flocks in the countryside in a geography and climate very much like Green Valley, Arizona. When we were broken-hearted, disillusioned and in need, GOD appointed pastors for us, just as GOD appointed Manna for when they? were lost in the wilderness; and coming into the Promised Land looking to the future GOD provided other leaders for that time in which to hope and build for the future after the Manna ceased. The ADVENT of CHRIST JESUS 2023 is a time in the world where praying for PEACE; praying for GOD to enter in; praying for each one's dignity; praying for our Future; praying for GOD to be WITH US: EMMANUEL is tangibly real.

## ***In This Issue***

**Sunday Worship  
Schedule**

**Christmas Worship  
Schedule**

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**Women's Ministries  
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**Mission Committee  
Updates**

**Bible Study  
Opportunities**

**Clerks Corner**

**2800 S Camino del Sol  
Green Valley, AZ 85622**

**Telephone: (520) 625-5023  
vpc-office@valleypres.net**

# OUR MISSION

To make Christ known through reconciliation while communicating respect and love to all people.

The principles we will follow to accomplish this are:

- Worship that glorifies God.
- Growing our faith in love, hope and the peace of Christ.
- Caring for the children of God.
- Reaching out to the community and the world.
- Seeking an attitude of servanthood.

## Valley Presbyterian Church

2800 S Camino Del Sol

Green Valley, AZ 85622

(520) 625-5023

vpc-office@valleypres.net

www.valleypresbyterian.net

Member of Presbytery de Cristo in The Synod of the Southwest,  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

## Pastors

**Rev. Dr. Craig Lindsey,**

Pastor/Head of Staff

**Rev. Diane Christopher,**

Pastor of Discipleship

**Rev. Joe Hawkins,**

Pastor Emeritus



**Sunday Worship**

**Traditional Service of Worship**

**9:30 a.m.**

**Online and in Person**

**www.valleypresbyterian.n**

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## **OUR VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN STAFF**

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Rev. Joe Hawkins.....Pastor Emeritus.....

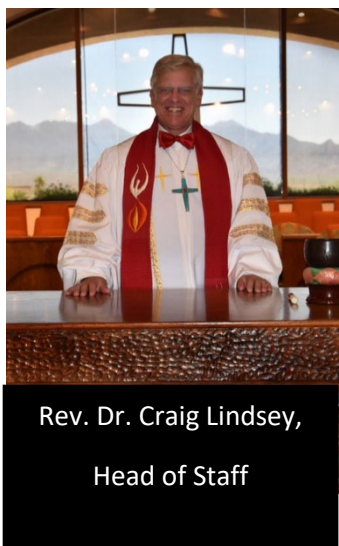
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## **SUNDAY Worship Schedule and Other Celebrations**

**Sunday Service is at 9:30 a.m. unless otherwise noted.**

<b>December 3</b>	<b>Advent I, Isaiah 64, Corinthians Communion Sunday, Food Bank Sunday</b>	<b>Pastor Craig</b>
<b>December 10</b>	<b>Advent II, Isaiah 40 Nogales Crossroads Mission Sunday</b>	<b>Pastor Craig</b>
<b>December 17</b>	<b>Advent III Christmas Cantata Youth On Their Own Sunday</b>	<b>Pastor Diane</b>
<b>December 21 4:00 p.m.</b>	<b>The Longest Night Prayer Service with Soup and Bread to Follow</b>	<b>Pastor Diane</b>
<b>December 24 9:30 a.m. Worship</b>	<b>Advent IV Micah 5:2, Luke 1 and 2 “Bethlehem: An Unusual Choice”</b>	<b>Pastor Diane</b>
<b>December 24 Christmas Eve 7:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Communion by Intinction</b>	<b>Pastor Craig</b>
<b>December 31</b>	<b>“Our Story”</b>	<b>Pastor Diane</b>



Rev. Dr. Craig Lindsey,  
Head of Staff

## *From Pastor Craig*

### **Listening For God**

Thus far in life, as an ordained pastor, I have yet to see/hear the clouds part and a voice proclaim what I/we were to do. There have however been times when I have heard a nudging of how to respond and how to not respond, where I listened to God. Oh how I wish God would speak more often!

Thirty years ago, I was the President of a City's Ethics Committee. My undergraduate degree was in the Political Science and Economics of Urban Planning so I thought this a good use of my education. The Committee was designed by the Mayor and City Council to be a "blue-ribbon appointed committee" intended to provide the appearance of transparency and good government without really doing anything aside from verifying Conflict of Interest statements from all City/Police/Fire employees.

After three years, the Committee recognized that while the City Attorney and a Council member had together bought farmland for speculation when that property came up for utilities development, they had not disclosed that they were the owners who would benefit from the City installing roads, electricity, sewers, and water. When we began a very quiet investigation (our confidentially reviewing the City Council Minutes), the Mayor and Attorney threatened those of us on the Ethics Committee with the power of their offices. I listened and did not challenge them. When it was my turn to speak, I disclosed that a city is accountable to the County and to the State Ethics Commissions and while the separation of Church and State did not prevent a pastor from serving as a volunteer for the City, elected officials threatening that pastor and their church was. Two days later, the Mayor, City Attorney and Council member all resigned from office.

Twenty years ago, refugees, the church had assisted to live in America, described their inability to leave our country to go in search of their families and need of someone to go on their behalf. I offered that I had time and resources to go. I heard in my mind the Isaiah 6 verse "Here am I send me!" What I had not anticipated was their response of what it meant that their pastor would leave everything on their behalf; what it meant to seek and find the lost; and just how severe the circumstance of entering into a warzone in Saharan East Africa as I came close to death.

The more recent was when a parishioner came to the church stating that she had no one, so who would be there for her when she died. I heard the response, "God will be with you, your church will be with you, I will be there with you." A few weeks later she had designated me as her POA, POHC, POMHC, Executor. Throughout the last year of her life, I had the honor/responsibility of walking beside her, always aware that as long as she could make decisions, she needed to do so. There were times I found services and resources for her, that she was not ready to have, but later we knew where to go for assistance. I visited her in the hospital and in her home and prayed with her, including on the night she was passed from our care into GOD's arms. Afterwards, I went to the Mortuary to present her wishes for her remains. Then I went to her attorney, who had written the paperwork for me to have these responsibilities, and I named to him that I needed him to step up as it would be a conflict of interest for me to serve as her Executor. He named that I was not personally to benefit from her estate in any way, so it was not a legal conflict of interest. I stated that that was true, but the Church stood to be a recipient of her estate, and as pastor, to me that represented a conflict of interest.

I have not yet heard GOD leading me into battle, or that the church should do a building campaign, etc. There have been several times in sermons, in meetings, in life, when I believe GOD was speaking and I was privileged to serve as an instrument if I could get out of my own way.



## ***From Pastor Diane***

Starting January 1, I will no longer be your pastor.

What does that mean for you? For me?

It is common practice in a church that when a pastor leaves, that pastor is not allowed back on campus for a specific amount of time. This is done to protect me, the outgoing pastor, so I am not drawn back into the things of church. It protects Pastor Craig because he is your pastor (not the ex-pastor who keeps showing up). It protects any new pastor coming in, so I will not interfere with that person's work and keeps you from comparing this new pastor to me. Pastor Craig and I have agreed that I shall remain off campus for at least one year. After one year, I will contact Pastor Craig, and we will discuss if it is appropriate for me to come on campus.

Pastor Craig and I have also agreed that I can socialize with you as long as it is off campus and not a sponsored church event. I will make the stipulation that we do not talk about church. If we do, knowing me, I may be tempted to give my opinion as a former pastor!

No longer being your pastor means I cannot do a memorial for you or a family member. Pastor Craig is your pastor, and he is the one who will do all memorials. If you do ask me, please forgive me, I will say "no."

Email blasts will continue, even though that has been my "baby." We started these daily email blasts during the pandemic so we could stay in contact with you on a regular basis. The Faith Formation Committee will head that up along with Pastor Craig. At least a couple times a week, you will see devotions written by members of our congregation. If you would like to write a devotion for the email blast for 2024, please contact Linda Freeman ([13733beb@gmail.com](mailto:13733beb@gmail.com)).

I know much of this sounds harsh. Some of you have said, "It sounds like you are being exiled. This is not fair to you."



### **Pastor Diane Christopher-Pastor of Discipleship**

Please understand pastors are taught this in their training. We know this is coming. That does not make it easy or fair, but it is necessary.

A question people keep asking is "Are you counting the days?" My answer is no. I am looking forward to retirement, to a new adventure in my life, but I am not looking forward to not worshipping with you. You have become my family.

At the beginning of my pastoral ministry, I attended a conference for pastors on relating to church members. We were told not to make friends with our congregants. All of us pastors in attendance looked at one another. I knew what they were thinking: too late.

Whether it was a good thing or not, you have become my friends. This leaving will be as hard on me as it will be for you. So no, I am not counting the days. I ask December to slow down.

There will be plenty of opportunities for us to say good-bye during this last month. We have been through so much together. We have gone through good times and awful times, and together, we have experienced the joy of God's resurrection of VPC.

I love you with all my heart. So why am I leaving? Because the call is over. Not by the church, but by God. You will hear more about that call when I revisit our 14 years together in my last worship service with you on December 31.

And I hope you will all come to the party on January 21. And party we will!

## **GIFTS AT THE END OF THE YEAR**

By Pastor Craig Lindsey

**ZAMBONI.** While our Sanctuary and Offices are carpeted, much of the Church building has hard surface floors that require mopping. While not actually a Zamboni used at Ice Rinks, we have a new machine that is a Walk-behind Floor Scrubber which washes, scrubs, and squeegees the floor for a cleaner finish than ever possible before. This new machine will save hours of time for our custodial staff and provide better care for our hard surface floors.

**NEW WIFI.** For years our Church building has had WIFI with cabling and distribution Routers providing a signal in the Offices and Room 5. During COVID19 our use of WIFI increased greatly. We now have new wiring throughout the Fellowship Hall, Charter Hall, Spiritual Life Center, with signal available in the Sanctuary and throughout the building at 4 Bars! In the Robe Room there is now a new Switching Station.

**PARKING LOTS RESURFACED.** In 2022 we had all of the parking lots resealed, however the product which the Paving Company used proved to not wear well. We contacted the Company about this, and free of charge they came back after temperatures got below 100 degrees and resealed the entire parking lots and restriped. We are thankful to have a great company that stands behind their work.

**CHOIR SOUND SYSTEM.** Finally, after decades of the Choir being unable to hear our Worship of GOD, and 6 months of the parts being on order, a new kind of speaker has been installed on the Chancel aimed for the Choir to hear without hitting the windows which would reflect, or the microphones which would re-amplify. Now the question is if the Choir will appreciate what they hear clearly? A new Blue-tooth Dante Sound Board is still on order, factory delayed due to COVID19. Once installed the new Sound Board should improve our Sound System even more and create possibilities for better balancing of microphones.

**ESTATES.** Our congregation passed many long-time devoted leaders into the resurrection this year. What was not known in their lifetimes is that several of these not only donated the contents of their homes for the Patio Sale, they also donated the sale of their homes to the church. When gifts like these come to the Foundation, the estates become part of the investments of the Foundation (separate from the Operating Budget) to benefit the church for perpetuity. Annually, as available, the Foundation Board determines what funds are available from annual Interest income on these investments, which our church then uses to pay for Capital Improvements like these mentioned above. What a wonderful legacy these members have given our church both in their lives and now for evermore.

# **Bible Study with Pastor Craig at VPC**

## **BIBLE REFLECTIONS**

With Pastor Craig Lindsey  
Mondays from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.  
in classroom 5 (zoom available)

This is a different kind of Bible study, that spends as much time as we need with each chapter and book. We will try to give background that is helpful and offers ideas about interpretations (even pronunciation of names), but what is most important is what you hear in the text.

You don't have to attend every class and you may join at any time.

To join by zoom, go to <https://zoom.us/join>

Meeting ID: 294 281 2414

Password: Heaven

**Previous classes are recorded and can be viewed on the church's website:**  
[valleypres.net](https://valleypres.net)

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## **The Songs of Christmas: Advent Devotional 2023**

*The Songs of  
Christmas*

*Advent Devotional  
2023*



The Season of Advent is a time to prepare our hearts and souls and minds for the coming of the Christ Child. To help you with this, Valley Church has produced its own Advent Devotional written by members of our congregation. Each writer reflects on their favorite Christmas Carol. The devotional is available now, and can be picked up at the Welcome Centers and in the church office. We have plenty, so pick some up for yourself and family, neighbors, and friends.

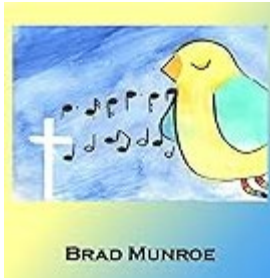


SAVE THE DATE  
SATURDAY, JANUARY 20 FROM 9:00 TO NOON(ISH)  
WITH LUNCH INCLUDED

## ***Rhythms of the God-Life***

**An invitation to dig deeper into God's Word**

*Submitted by: Linda Freeman*



Save the morning of Saturday, January 20 for the opportunity to explore the Scriptures in a unique way that encourages us to dig deeper into the Bible.

You are invited to a Bible study workshop led by Rev. Dr. Brad Munroe. Brad is the author of *Rhythms of the God-Life*, which explores Scripture through creative paraphrase, poetry and prayers. Inspired by first century biblical letters, this workshop is designed to speak powerfully to twenty-first century readers.

More detailed information will be in the January Valley Voice – including how to make reservations. There is no cost.

Use this workshop as a special building block in deepening your faith.



## **A Celebration of Light and Peace**

**December 8, @ 4:00 P.M.**

**Valley Presbyterian Church**

December is a time for the annual Jewish Celebration of Hanukkah as well as the Christian Celebration of Advent. We are planning a service of singing and prayer for peace and light. Join the Clergy of Green Valley along with Rabbi Norm from the Green Valley Synagogue.

Please bring your neighbors and come! Tell everyone you can!

If you would like to join in a spontaneous ecumenical Choir, we will be singing Sebastian Temple's "Make Me A Channel of Your Peace" The Prayer of St. Francis; Rehearsal begins at 3pm December 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Stephen Ministry**  
**Three Essentials for an Empathy Mindset**  
Jana Honermann, Stephen Leader Team Coordinator



If You Are Feeling Blue, There Is a Stephen Minister for You

It is often difficult to feel full of good cheer this time of year, especially for those who will be going through the holiday season for the first time after suffering a loss or going through a life transition in the past year. No matter how hard you try, no matter how grateful you want to be for the good things in your life, or how often you hear Happy Holidays or Merry Christmas, you just do not feel cheerful or happy! You grit your teeth, paste a smile on your face, and respond back “Merry Christmas.” But your heart is not smiling, nor do you feel merry. In fact, you might feel like your heart is breaking or that you might burst into tears at any minute.

You are not alone! God is with you and if you so desire, a Stephen Minister can walk beside you as you wrestle with your gloomy thoughts and breaking heart. A Stephen Minister will listen to you, cry with you, and provide you with compassionate care. Please contact Carolyn Hill or Bob Lillie, the Stephen Leaders who can match you with a Stephen Minister. Or you can contact the church office who will then refer you to the Stephen Ministers.

God give you comfort and peace through Advent, Christmas, and into the New Year.

Celebrating the Birth of Jesus  
at  
Valley Presbyterian Church

THE MIRACLE OF  
**Christmas**

- December 17, 9:30 a.m. - “Everlasting Light” Christmas Cantata
- December 21, 4:00 p.m. - Longest Night Service followed by Soup and Bread
- December 24, 9:30 a.m. - Worship Service
- December 24, 7:00 p.m. - Christmas Eve Worship with Communion

# PATIO SALE NEWS

*Submitted by Carmen Nylund*

We have just completed a very successful **Holiday Plus Sale** and we want to say thank you to all of our volunteers, trucking crew, kitchen team, staff and shoppers. This sale included holiday items of all kinds, a wide selection of books, specialty items in our Unique Boutique, a selection of clothing, shoes and purses and cowboy boots, a bake sale and handcrafted items created by local artisans. The income for the 2023 Holiday-Plus Sale was \$13,972.96 (and counting).

A total income figure for 2023 will be shared in the January Valley Voice. It will be awesome! We still have our expenses to pay and unfortunately, like everything else, the “cost of doing business” continues to increase. It is always our goal that the net income from these two sales be used to provide financial support for Valley Presbyterian Church’s designated mission and outreach programs.

If you have not already heard, two of our Patio Sale Coordinating Team members have decided it is time to step away from their leadership roles with Patio Sale and I want to say thank you to Les and Linda Walter for their many years of dedication to Patio Sale. They are not abandoning us, just taking a well-deserved break. They will be around to help get new Team members up and running.

And speaking of new Team members, we are happy to welcome Jim McDougall to the Coordinating Team. He will be taking on the responsibilities for the Trucking Crew, organizing table and tent rentals, etc. We look forward to working with Jim. We are always looking for men and women to be part of the trucking crew. If you are interested or know of someone that might be interested in joining the crew, please let one of the Coordinating Team members know.

The 2023 Patio Sale and Holiday Sale year is at an end. However, we are already making plans for 2024. So mark your Calendars now!

**Annual Patio Sale    March 14, 15 & 16, 2024**  
**Holiday Plus Sale    November 7 & 8, 2024**

We thank all of you for your continuing support of this exciting, meaningful, and sometimes exhausting program.

Your Patio Sale Coordinating Team

Carmen Nylund	Les Walter
Pat Nau	Linda Walter
Chris Schorr	Nelda Lobb
Jim McDougall	



**From the Children's Contingent**  
**Sunday School Lessons in December**  
**Biblical Humility**  
**Only God is God – We are Not**  
Submitted by Pam Karbowsky



Philippians 2:6-7

*“Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.”*

Our Sunday School lessons in December (Humble Beginnings) will be a study of Mary, the shepherds, the Magi and Jesus and how they displayed humility in response to the birth of Jesus.

Take Mary for example. She was confused, scared and oh yes—she had a ton of questions. But she said okay-I trust and accept God's plan for me.

And what about those shepherds. Just lowly workers out in the field. Tired and dirty. Nonetheless they listened to the angels, went in search of Jesus and spread the news!

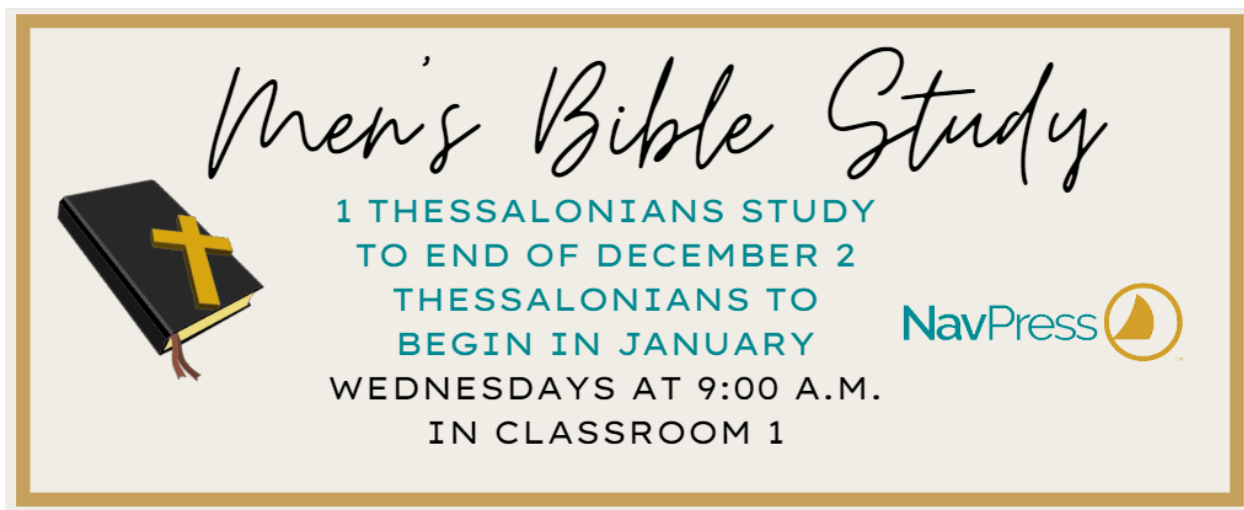
The Magi. Wealthy wise men. Just remember—no matter how successful or powerful we are---God is God....we are not. The Magi were outsiders, not even Jewish. Yet they worshipped Jesus and brought him gifts.

And finally, Jesus Himself. He showed his humility simply by being born as a human and then He trusted God's plan.

2Corinthians 8:9

*“ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.”*

How will you show humility this season?



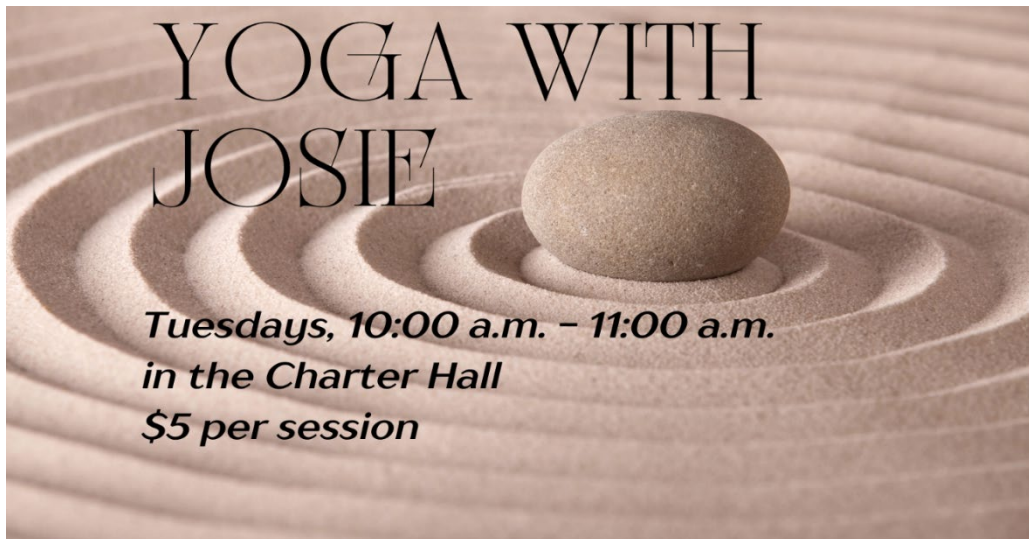
The Men's Bible Study meets every Wednesday morning at 9 a.m. They meet at the church for one hour in classroom 1. The group is facilitated by Larry Phillips (520) 777-8027, but focuses on group discussion. They use the NavPress Life Change Series study guide. They will finish studying Paul's letter to the 1 Thessalonians in December. Join the group any time to participate in the discussion or come to just listen. In either case, your presence will be welcomed. Lessons are self-contained so feel free to join the group when able. Larry has a limited number of the of the 1 Thessalonians study guide for \$8.00. The Navigators Life Change study guide is also available from Amazon or Christianbook.com.



For your reading and viewing pleasure, Advent/Christmas books and DVDs in the church library.







Josie Trobec, a certified yoga instructor, leads a yoga practice that focuses on centering ourselves in the Presence of God... to learn how to incorporate one's Christian faith with a yoga practice, the idea of melding BODY, MIND and SPIRIT.

The class opens with scripture that speaks to a practice of faith during the breath work. The body of the class is a combination of standing poses, balance poses and floor poses. The classes close with restorative yoga, a practice of calm alertness allowing a time of reflection and thanksgiving for God's Presence in our lives. This class is for all levels, modifications are offered for all poses, including practicing from a chair rather than the mat.

Please bring your own mat. Props are also welcome, such as blocks, straps, and blanket.





## *Join Us For*

A Service of Remembrance, Healing, Hope and Prayer, which will be held on Thursday, December 21 at 4:00 PM in the Spiritual Life Center. A light dinner of soup and bread will be provided following this service.

Please submit any loved one's/friend's/ pet's names and a brief remembrance sentence if you are unable to attend. We will read these as we light a candle for those remembered during this service.

You may email your information [pastordiane@valleypres.net](mailto:pastordiane@valleypres.net) or call the church office at 520-625-5023.

# **Music in the Valley Presents!**

Submitted by: Jamie Reed

## **December 17, 9:30 a.m. Worship Service “Everlasting Light”**

This amazing work of art looks at the themes of light and darkness in the Christmas story and how the light of Christ touches all lives. Our cantata includes several familiar carols as well as some original material.

Our amazing Chancel Choir will be accompanied by an orchestra comprised of Tucson talents as well as our talented congregants. Our kiddos will even be joining us in a song!





## WOMEN'S MINISTRIES VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

*Submitted by Lesley Bruce, Women's Ministries Moderator*

It is hard to believe that it will be December when you all read this! Where in the world did the year go? One more month and we'll have to learn to write 2024 - and I was JUST getting used to writing 2023!

We are very excited to see our winter family coming back to Green Valley and Valley Presbyterian. At the November Gathering Luncheon there were lots of hugs all over the place as we greeted our friends we haven't seen since Spring. Welcome Back!!



**Women's Ministries will have one more Gathering Luncheon in 2023** and it promises to be a fun celebration of Christmas. The date is **Tuesday December 19, at 11:30 in Fellowship Hall and the menu will be a Vegetarian Potluck.** Get out your cookbooks (or go on-line) and find that favorite meatless casserole or main dish, salad or dessert. There will be no cost for this luncheon since you all will be bringing a dish to share. We still need you to sign up for the luncheon, so we know how many places to set. You can sign up before or after services on **Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup>.** The Presby Gift for December will be monetary contributions to Valley Assistance Services. The Hostesses will be the members of the Coordinating Team.

Looking ahead to our February luncheon and Style Show we would like to invite any and all of the ladies who love to cook, plate, serve or clean up, to volunteer to help with the luncheon. The main part of the meal will be catered and will be those delicious quiches!! But we need help with salad and dessert preparation and serving our many guests, and to clear the tables. Please see me or Anne Morrison if you are interested in helping. This is usually hosted by the Ruth Circle but there are so many members who are also models that we are short help. Please come help us out and have fun in the process.

Wishing you all a VERY Merry and Blessed Christmas.



## *Caring for those in our congregation*

### ***Faith & Health/Parish Nurse September 2023***

*Submitted by Parish Nurse, Chris Erickson*

Join us at Cardio-drumming; this class has just a few more openings. Cardio drumming begins at 9 am on Tuesdays and is once a week; a 30-minute exercise program for health, stress, and balance. Please email [parishnurse@valleypres.net](mailto:parishnurse@valleypres.net) for more information and/or for registration.

Keeping active helps to stay positive and healthy and strengthens ankles and quads which can prevent falls.

Drink plenty of water when you are exercising or are outside doing activities. Be careful of dehydration especially in these hot summer months.



Blood pressure screening will be by individual appointment.



**Save the Date:** American Red Cross blood drive here at VPC. Thursdays in 2024, February 29<sup>th</sup>, May 16<sup>th</sup>, July 25<sup>th</sup>, and November 21<sup>st</sup> from 9 am – 2 pm. Watch for more information on future eblasts and bulletins.

**Medical Minute** Holidays can bring stress and other feelings, such as feeling blue. Feeling blue versus depression - do you know the difference? If your feelings of sadness linger, feelings interfere with your work, sleep, or daily activities, you experience fatigue or weight changes with sadness, you feel worthlessness, you may be experiencing major depression. Know the difference and know who to contact: a healthcare provider, a mental health provider, or emergency services.



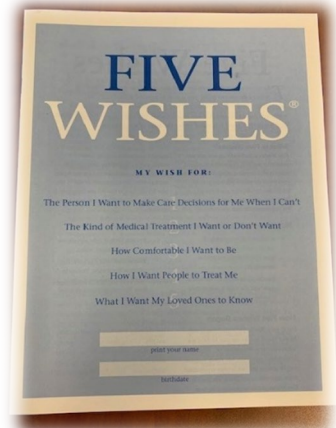
# Give a Gift of Wishes

*Submitted by: Parish Nurse, Chris Erickson*

Many of us face uncertainties. We can dwell on things that may arise during the Holiday and Christmas season, and even before the season begins. There is stress and sometimes health concerns with all that surrounds us during a busy Holiday season.

It is also the most beautiful time of the year with the most glorious birth, and with that love: He washes away our uncertainties with perfect love.

A gift of wishes is a wonderful gift, and what better time to give this? How can we talk about our wishes in a time of Holiday presents and cheer. Many years ago, a person came into my office, tears rolling down, stated “I cannot do this. I cannot talk about this.” Was it fear of talking about final wishes, was it the fear of making decisions, was it the fear about discussing this subject with loved ones? Two months after this statement, the same person came in with a smile, and said “I did it. I feel great and shared this with my family.”



We never know when things might happen, however we can be prepared. A gift of wishes can be a gift of peace, of preparedness for the family, and loved ones. Never wait too long, decisions will be made for you and might not always agree with what you wanted. Five Wishes is an example of an advanced directive.

There are others on the AzHDR; This is a newer website in our state, Arizona for Advanced Directives Registry. Under the tab Registry, you will find a tab for consumers, and they have a 23-page advanced directive that can be filled out on-line and registered with the state. These are just two examples of advanced directives available.

God is always there for us. We need to remember this in the times of uncertainties, in times of illnesses, in times of stress, during tragedy, or loss, and during the Holidays.

May you be blessed every day through all the work you do, however big or small, every smile you create, every person you touch, and everything you give to others.

May a renewed sense of love and peace fill your hearts in this Christmas Season and throughout the New Year.

Blessings,

Chris





# CLERK'S CORNER

MAUREEN RAMSAY, CLERK OF SESSION

## THE CONGREGATION, PART TWO

Last month I talked about the benefits of being a member of a congregation. This month, I want to explain what it means to be a part of a Presbyterian congregation.

First, let's go over the three main types of church government, Hierarchal or Episcopal, Congregational, and Presbyterian.

1. **Hierarchal or Episcopal**- Episcopal comes from the Greek word "episcopos", which means "bishop." It is marked by authority provided by a bishop. Here the authority comes from above and moves downward, from Pope or a council of bishops to bishops to priests. Examples include Roman Catholic, Episcopal, and Methodist.
2. **Congregational**—puts all power in the hands of the people. Decisions are made by the congregation and each one acts independently. Theoretically everyone votes on every issue on every occasion. In practice, churches often have a board of deacons or trustees to handle many issues, but the congregation can still seek to vote on any matter. Examples are Baptist and United Church of Christ.
3. **Presbyterian**—is democratic and representative. The word "Presbyterian" comes from the Greek word "presbuteros", which means "elder." Oversight is done by a group of elders called a session and elected by the local congregation. Representatives of each session in a geographical area come together to form a Presbytery. A group of Presbyteries form a synod and all synods form the General Assembly. Decisions of lower governing bodies are reviewed by higher bodies. Presbyterians believe this governing system is established in accord with Scriptures and exists to further good order in the church.

In the Presbyterian church, there are three categories of membership. They are:

1. **Baptized Member**- a person who has received the Sacrament of Baptism, but who has not made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
2. **Active Member**-a person who has been baptized, made a profession of faith, and been received into membership of the church.
3. **Affiliate Member**-a person who is a member of another congregation who has temporarily moved or is a part-time resident.

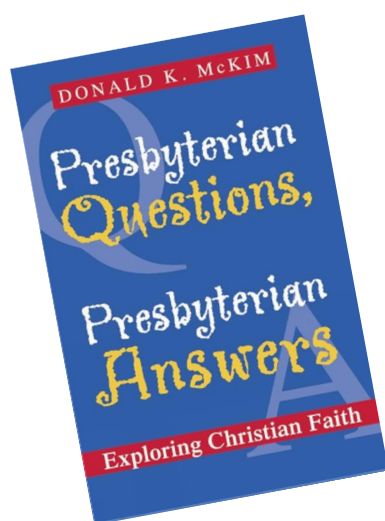
The church also welcomes people who are not members of, or who may have ceased active participation in the church, to participate in the life and worship of the church.

When each of us joined Valley Pres, we promised to be a faithful member of the congregation, to give of our time and talents, and to seek the fellowship of the church. We made a commitment to participate in Christ's mission. That includes being present at worship, casting a vote at congregational meetings, serving on committees, volunteering when there is a need, etc. The Book of Order Section G-1.0304 outlines the responsibilities of membership. They are:

1. Proclaiming the good news in word and deed,
2. Taking part in the common life and worship of a congregation,
3. Lifting one another up in prayer, mutual concern, and active support,
4. Studying Scripture and the issues of Christian faith and life,
5. Supporting the ministry of the church through the giving of money, time, and talents,
6. Demonstrating a new quality of life within and through the church,
7. Responding to God's activity in the world through service to others,
8. Living responsibly in the personal, family, vocational, political, cultural, and social relationships of life,
9. Working in the world for peace, justice, freedom, and human fulfillment, caring for God's creation,
10. Participating in the governing responsibilities of the church,
11. Reviewing and regularly evaluating the integrity of one's membership and considering ways in which one's participation in the worship and service of the church may be increased and made more meaningful.

Wow, that is a lot of stuff to do! Donald K. McKim, in his book Presbyterian Questions/Presbyterian Answers states: "Uniquely, the church is the only organization where to become a member one has to admit one is unworthy of membership!" It might seem like that at times, but being a member of a Presbyterian congregation has many rewards. Everyone has a voice, and everyone has the opportunity to serve and be served. The church does not just have a mission, but is a mission, and we are summoned as followers of Jesus to not only go to church but to be the church.

Donald K. McKim (2003): *Presbyterian Questions, Presbyterian Answers*



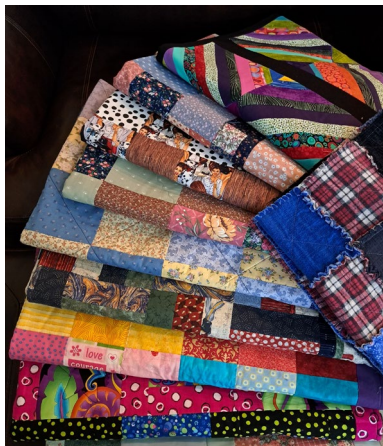
**Available at our VPC  
library – 285 M45**

Doctor Marvin and Sandy Clark have moved from Green Valley and have donated \$900.00 worth of Surgical Instruments and Medical supplies for St. Andrew's Children's Clinic. Laura is happy to receive and share this donation with doctors who provide services to the Clinic.

Laura Romero and two office personnel were in Hermosillo November 9, until November 14 with 18 children needing Rhinoplasty to rebuild their mouths and nasal passages. They were born with Cleft Palates and now, as teenagers, need follow-up surgeries. The CSI (Children's Surgical International) team flew from Minnesota to Mexico to conduct surgeries for these children. The Clinic provided hotel rooms and meals for the families during their stay in Hermosillo.

The November clinic served about 60 children and their families. It was a slow day because it happened to be on the Day of the Dead holiday when many families were involved in celebrations for deceased loved ones.

A number of Green Valley residents want to provide Christmas gifts for children at the Clinic. Handmade/hand painted toys made by a group in Minnesota are offered. Patti Bright and the VPC quilters are sending quilts to the December Clinic Party. Laura is very appreciative of these generous Christmas offerings.



Picture of some of the quilts donated to St Andrew's Clinic



Kay Brouwer loading donated quilts to take to St Andrew's Clinic.

Kay and several donors will present the gifts at St. Andrew's Children's Clinic on the day of the Christmas party, December 7, 2023. Laura is excited to have a Christmas celebration for the children and families served by the Clinic. She feels knows God has blessed the Clinic with the generosity of so many of the Green Valley community.



***Casa Vida Nueva Para Niños, A.C.  
"Home for Children" (Orphanage)  
Submitted by Reed Olson***



**Last chance to sign up for the December 9<sup>th</sup>  
Christmas Visit to the Orphanage**  
Deadline is December 5<sup>th</sup>

Reed Olson, of the VPC Mission Committee, is coordinating a trip to visit the "Home for Children" in Nogales, Sonora, MX, providing gifts to 35 abused/abandon children who live in the "Home." There are just a few spaces left for the transportation. Contact Reed Olson at: [reedolson5623@gmail.com](mailto:reedolson5623@gmail.com) by December 5 if you would like to come along and witness the children opening their Christmas gifts. You must have a passport. Transportation and lunch, provided. Cost is \$10 per person which helps reimburse the driver for MX insurance, gas, and tolls.





Los Ninos del Valle Preschool appreciates so much the support Posada Life Community Service receives from Valley Presbyterian Church and Mission Committee.

Below are some of the reasons why Los Ninos del Valle Preschool is a success, thanks to donors like you:

- Four-star rating in the Arizona's Quality First program that provides intensive coaching, program assessment and resources.
- Intergenerational programs that offer rich, regular programming between children and older adults attending programs at the Community Center, Adult Day Services, and at La Posada's various senior living settings. Quality time spent between a child and an older adult enhances natural development, builds self-esteem, and improves the quality of life.
- Fee assistance to help low-income working families cover the cost of child care or for families who need short-term help while waiting for paychecks from newly found employment to catch up with expenses.
- Qualified teachers with early childhood education focused on developmentally appropriate materials and learning environments.
- Department of Economic Security certification allowing families who have qualified for and received approval for these extremely limited state child care funds to enroll their child.



## AN UPDATE ON FUNDRAISING FOR THE NEW CLASSROOM

Dear sister and brother

As they say here in the borderlands, “la lucha sigue” (the struggle continues.) Indeed, it does, and we want to assure you that the love continues too.

A team from PC(USA) churches in the US has been helping Compañeros en Misión raise funds to build a place to host our food ministry, our tutoring program, and our neighborhood health check-ups. So far, we have raised \$49,000 of an estimated \$79,000 the funds needed for the building. In the addition, monies will be needed to furnish the building. The current plan is for a "Build the Building" fund-raiser to be held in the Fall of 2023, and there will be lots of fun ways to help finish the building and provide furnishings for it.

The new classroom building will occupy the space between our current two buildings shown in this photo.



Compañeros en Misión continues to offer food to migrants on the streets of Nogales, rides to church on Sunday, and healthcare to their immediate neighbors in the community. They also provide toys and games for the children who are waiting. They do the Lord's work willingly and with amazing love and care, and they are grateful for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Friends of Compañeros en Misión



Samaritan's Purse

PO Box 3000

Boome, NC 28607

# Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Collection

*Submitted by: Ann Ball, Mission Liaison*



828-262-1980

[www.smaritanspurse.org](http://www.smaritanspurse.org)



Samaritan Purse is a nondenominational, evangelical, Christian organization that shares the good news of Jesus Christ through the Operation Christmas Child Shoebox program. This is one of many of their projects, and one Valley Presbyterian has been participating in for many years. Samaritan Purse invites churches worldwide to fill Christmas shoeboxes with toys, clothing, school supplies and other various small objects for daily living.

After sharing the story of the Good Samaritan, Jesus said, “Go and do likewise.” That is the mission of Samaritan Purse—to follow the example of Christ by helping those in need and proclaiming the hope of the gospel. For over 25 years, SP has been distributing Shoeboxes gifts to millions of children in over 100 countries into very remote areas. The ultimate aim is to make known the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ as the shoeboxes offer a gift of love and hope and leads to hearing the Gospel by the local trained leaders.

Valley Presbyterian's role in this worldwide project is to facilitate the dissemination of the empty shoeboxes, provide information on the correct filling of the box, collect, and store the filled boxes once they have been returned, t h e n deliver the boxes to the appropriate processing center (for us in Tucson), to be shipped out on the designated date to the various countries.

Prayers are asked to be said for the receipt of the box and the child and the child's family. Info is provided later as to which country our boxes from Valley Pres were shipped.

This year 2023 88 boxes were filled and delivered to the Sahuarita Calvary Church for processing November 16. In addition, every single box this year was returned with the shipping costs included of \$10 per box. Monies were left over from the shipping due to further general donations to the project yet still coming in which the Mission Committee voted to be given to SP for cost of the “The Greatest Journey” Bible Study series which accompanies the boxes to the local destination.

## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Keep praying all year for the child that received your box and for the Operation Children's Shoebox mission...to hear and spread the word of God throughout their lands.

The Valley Pres Mission Committee also needs volunteers for this project to assist with assembling of boxes, the work on Sunday morns of distribution and receipt of the boxes, publicizing the project, and delivery of the boxes to the Processing Centers.



# PRESBYTERIAN MISSION

Bob and Kristi Rice are our supported missionaries to South Sudan. Their communication tool to our congregation is through their blog- [bobandkristi.blogspot.com](http://bobandkristi.blogspot.com)- which they write twice per month. Only a portion of their inspiring story can be shared in the Valley Voice. Join VPC members who promise to pray and follow the blogs.

*Submitted by: Doug Clark*

## **Visiting Churches and South Sudanese Diaspora in Lincoln and Omaha, Nebraska**

What a gift to visit Lincoln and Omaha, Nebraska, last weekend! We are grateful for Pastor Melodie Jones Pointon and Eastridge Presbyterian Church for hosting us, and thankful for opportunities to visit Westminster Presbyterian Church of Lincoln and the Nuer Union gathering which met at Nile Church in Omaha.

For me (Bob), it also felt like a homecoming, as my grandfather was born and raised in Broken Bow, western Nebraska, near the Sand Hills. Somehow the landscape feels native to my soul. It also felt like a homecoming as we were able to visit and connect with South Sudanese Diaspora. Praying and worshipping with Nuer friends and their family in their home in Omaha felt like a slice of heaven. The family of Rev. James Guek and Mama Sarah Kuac, whom we visited, are vitally connected to the late Rev. Pastor Moses Kuac, the first Nuer pastor in South Sudan, who serves a central part of one of the case studies of my PhD research. It was a gift to hear more stories from his Sarah daughter, and to meet all their children.



Rev. James Guek and Mama Sarah Kuac and family



We feel so grateful for the blessing of being able to enjoy precious time with people and explore some beautiful places. To those who gave us a bed or a delicious meal or met us along the way, thank you! Truly, each day is a gift.

The past blogs read like a real-life novel, chronicling God in action through the writings of Bob and Kristi Rice. Please join me in following and praying for our missionaries and let me know if you have joined the blog brigade by emailing me [douglasclark68@me.com](mailto:douglasclark68@me.com).





# Nogales Crossroads Mission

*Submitted by: Les Walter, Crossroads Liaison*

Christmas at Nogales Crossroads Mission will be Saturday, December 16, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. We are taking toy donations or monetary donations to purchase toys for the children of 3 to 12 years of age and are looking to feed a ham dinner for 150 people.

Thank you for your generosity through out this past year. You have brought so much joy, love, and warmth to all who have passed through the mission with donations of bedding, hygiene items, gifts, food and more...

For more information of ways, you can help.  
Contact Les Walter at 520-870-3284 or  
visit Crossroads website at  
[crossroadmissionnogales.org](http://crossroadmissionnogales.org)





COMMUNITY  
FOOD BANK  
OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA



*Submitted by: Kylene Joplin*

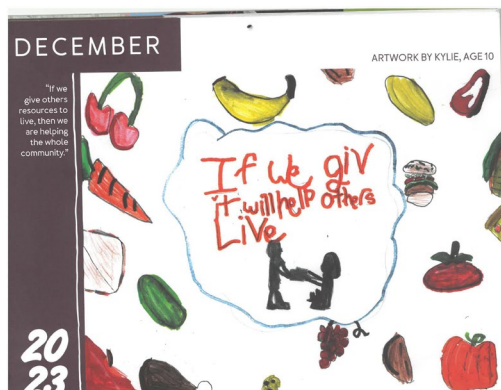
Food Bank Sunday is December 3<sup>rd</sup>. VPC has always shown tremendous generosity and we hope to continue doing so.

Most of us are fortunate to enjoy good food and ample meals every day but there are many in the Green Valley area who do not.

You can make an incredible difference in the lives of many. 100% of your monetary donation stays right here in our community. Every \$1 you give can help provide enough food for four meals.

Your gift of \$75 can help provide food for 347 meals for those facing hunger.

The Food Bank “cart” is located in the Fellowship Hall near the Spiritual Life Center. Thank you for helping us fill it up with can goods and non-perishable items.





*Submitted by Mary Horn, Mission Committee Liaison to YOTO*



**CONGRATULATIONS to YOUTH ON THEIR OWN**  
as they officially opened their FOREVER HOME  
located at 2525 N Country Club Road on Monday, November 6, 2023.  
Pastor Craig attended their grand opening on November 6, pictures below.



Folks can find the most needed items for the Mini Mall or make a financial contribution by going to the website: <https://yoto.org/backtoschool/>. At this site, we can order directly from Amazon and the supplies will be delivered directly to YOTO.



# December Birthdays

**First Name    Last Name    Birthday**

<i>Rick</i>	<i>Nau</i>	<i>December 01</i>
<i>Ron</i>	<i>Bell</i>	<i>December 02 Over 90</i>
<i>Betty</i>	<i>Kiesle-Yoder</i>	<i>December 02</i>
<i>Helen</i>	<i>Triplett</i>	<i>December 02 Over 90</i>
<i>Larry</i>	<i>Grove</i>	<i>December 04</i>
<i>Ruth</i>	<i>Kroon</i>	<i>December 04 Over 90</i>
<i>Earl</i>	<i>Yarborough</i>	<i>December 05</i>
<i>Robert</i>	<i>Pearson</i>	<i>December 06</i>
<i>John</i>	<i>Agner</i>	<i>December 08</i>
<i>John</i>	<i>Dunham</i>	<i>December 08</i>
<i>Steve</i>	<i>Ginader</i>	<i>December 08</i>
<i>Bill</i>	<i>Case</i>	<i>December 09 Over 90</i>
<i>Carol</i>	<i>Yarborough</i>	<i>December 12</i>
<i>Larry</i>	<i>Root</i>	<i>December 13</i>
<i>Ed</i>	<i>Schmidt</i>	<i>December 13</i>
<i>Sadie</i>	<i>St John</i>	<i>December 13</i>
<i>Ronald</i>	<i>Erickson</i>	<i>December 14</i>
<i>James</i>	<i>Montgomery</i>	<i>December 14</i>
<i>Gary</i>	<i>Yanamura</i>	<i>December 14</i>

# December Birthdays

**First Name   Last Name   Birthday**

Carol	Claton	December 16
Hank	Pedersen	December 16
De Etta	Haynes	December 20 Over 90
Judy	Aguayo	December 21
Jeannie	Moore	December 22 Over 90
Carol	Peeler	December 22
Phil	Pitts	December 23
Carol	Cikanek	December 25 Over 90
Ron	Darrah	December 27
Peggy	Klap	December 27 Turning 90 !!!!!
Joy	Johnson	December 28
Janice	McCoy	December 28
Christina	Baxter	December 29
Carol	Gutenkunst	December 29 Over 90
Tom	Macfarlane	December 30
Anne	Morrison	December 30
Janet	Plake	December 31



Valley Presbyterian Church December 2023						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					<div>1</div> <div>9:00am Parkinson's Chair Exercise</div> <div>1:00pm Journey Through Grief</div> <div>1:15pm GVCC Rehearsal</div>	<div>2</div> <div>8:00am Communion Prep</div> <div>11:00am Parkinson's Holiday Lunch</div>
<div>3 Food Bank Sunday</div> <div>9:30am Worship Service</div> <div>9:45am Children's Sunday School</div> <div>2:00pm Music in the Valley- Tucson Jazz Institute</div>	<div>4</div> <div>9:00am Parkinson's Chair Exercise</div> <div>9:00am GVCC Dress Rehearsal</div> <div>9:00am Mission Quilters</div> <div>1:00pm Bible Reflections</div> <div>7:00pm GVCC Concert</div>	<div>5</div> <div>9:00am Cardio Drumming</div> <div>9:00am Women's Ministry Meeting</div> <div>9:30am Prayer Ministry</div> <div>10:00am YOGA with Josie</div> <div>1:00pm Journey Through Grief</div> <div>1:00pm Valley Galley Food Prep</div> <div>1:30pm Buildings and Grounds</div> <div>2:30pm Joyful Spirit Ensemble</div> <div>2:30pm GVCC Concert</div>	<div>6</div> <div>8:00am PEO Chapter CA Holiday Brunch</div> <div>9:00am Men's Bible Study</div> <div>9:00am Parkinson's Chair Exercise</div> <div>10:00am Chair Exercise Class</div> <div>2:00pm Valley Ringers</div> <div>3:00pm Choir Rehearsal</div>	<div>7</div> <div>1:30pm Planning Committee</div>	<div>8</div> <div>9:00am Parkinson's Chair Exercise</div> <div>9:00am Stephen Ministry</div> <div>1:00pm Journey Through Grief</div> <div>3:00pm Choral Rehearsal</div> <div>4:00pm Celebration of Light and Peace</div>	<div>9</div>
<div>10 Nogales Crossroads</div> <div>9:30am Worship Service</div> <div>9:45am Children's Sunday School</div>	<div>11</div> <div>9:00am Parkinson's Chair Exercises</div> <div>9:00am Patio Sale Cord. Meeting</div> <div>9:30am Valley Fiber Arts Guild</div> <div>11:00am Valley Readers</div> <div>1:00pm Bible Reflections</div>	<div>12</div> <div>8:45am Mission Committee</div> <div>9:00am Cardio Drumming</div> <div>9:30am Faith Formation</div> <div>9:30am Prayer Ministry</div> <div>10:00am YOGA with Josie</div> <div>10:00am Personal Committee (off site)</div> <div>2:30pm Joyful Spirit Ensemble Rehearsal</div>	<div>13</div> <div>9:00AM Deacon Meeting</div> <div>9:00am Men's Bible Study</div> <div>9:00am Parkinson's Chair Exercise</div> <div>10:00am Chair Exercise</div> <div>1:00pm Mariam Circle</div> <div>2:00pm Valley Ringers</div> <div>3:00pm Choir Rehearsal</div>	<div>14</div>	<div>15</div> <div>9:00am Parkinson's Chair Exercise</div> <div>1:00pm Journey Through Grief</div>	<div>16</div>
<div>17 YOTO Sunday</div> <div>9:30am Worship Service</div> <div>9:30am Music in the Valley Christmas Cantata</div> <div>9:45am Children's Sunday School</div>	<div>18</div> <div>9:00am Parkinson's Chair Exercises</div> <div>9:00am Mission Quilters</div> <div>1:00pm Bible Reflections</div> <div>1:00pm Women's Luncheon Prep</div> <div>3:00pm Ruth Circle</div>	<div>19</div> <div>9:00am Cardio Drumming</div> <div>9:30am Prayer Ministry</div> <div>10:00am YOGA with Josie</div> <div>11:30pm Women's Gathering Lunch</div> <div>2:30pm Joyful Spirit Ensemble Rehearsal</div>	<div>20</div> <div>9:00am Men's Bible Study</div> <div>9:00am Parkinson's Chair Exercise</div> <div>10:00am Chair Exercise</div> <div>12:30pm Worship Committee</div> <div>2:00pm Valley Ringers</div> <div>3:00pm Choir Rehearsal</div>	<div>21</div> <div>1:30pm Planning Committee</div> <div>4:00pm Longest Night Service</div> <div>4:30pm Bread and Soup after Longest Night</div>	<div>22</div> <div>9:00am Parkinson's Chair Exercises</div> <div>1:00pm Journey Through Grief</div>	<div>23</div> <div>8:00am Communion prep</div>
<div>24</div> <div>9:30am Worship Service</div> <div>9:45am Children's Sunday School</div> <div>7:00pm Christmas Eve Worship</div>	<div>25 Christmas Office Closed</div>	<div>26</div> <div>9:30am Prayer Ministry</div> <div>10:00am YOGA with Josie</div> <div>2:30pm Joyful Spirit Ensemble Rehearsal</div>	<div>27</div> <div>9:00am Men's Bible Study</div> <div>9:00am Parkinson's Chair Exercise</div> <div>10:00am Chair Exercise</div> <div>2:00pm Valley Ringers</div> <div>3:00pm Choir Rehearsal</div>	<div>28</div> <div>8:30am Session Meeting</div>	<div>29</div> <div>9:00am Parkinson's Chair Exercises</div> <div>1:00pm Journey Through Grief</div>	<div>30</div>
<div>31 Noisy Offering</div> <div>9:30am Worship Service</div> <div>9:45am Children's Sunday School</div>						