

VERSE OF THE WEEK

Psalm126:4 "Restore our fortunes,
O Lord, like streams in the Negev."
Psalm126:4

Just as the people of Israel cried out, we pray for restoration in our world from COVID-19. In faith, we can be certain that restoration and joy can be made possible by the miraculous work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. My we grow spiritually as we wait upon the Lord in this time of suffering.

POINSETTIAS

Reminder: You are able to purchase one of our beautiful Poinsettias in honor or memory of a loved one or for yourself. The Poinsettias are \$12. In order to have your name listed before Christmas, please purchase it by the 20th of December. We are asking that you pick up your Poinsettias after the Sunday service on December 27th.



ADVENT HYMNS

Our video series on Hymns of Advent presented by James Gerber and Janet MacDonald continues through the four weeks of Advent. You may view these videos at www.alcsuncity.org/servicesanddevotions

2021 CALENDAR

Please send 2021 committee/group meetings and events to O.Hernandez@alcsuncity.org, by December 20th so they can be added to the 2021 church calendar. You will then need to speak to our receptionist, Elizabeth Borgman, to complete a room set-up sheet.

MIDWEEK MESSAGES

December 9, 2020

MESSAGE FROM JUDITH RAINFORTH



Greetings,

Because we love God and his people, we continue to pray our way through this time of COVID-19. We are trying to be responsible so our decisions keep us safe and healthy. The Church Council meets weekly to assess current ministry practices as they analyze data in Arizona and more specifically in our community. The Grand Canyon Synod gives us regular updates and words of encouragement as we develop our ministries that will not only involve those who can be physically present but also via mail and online. Not all have access to computers and modern technology, so it is important that we be creative in our efforts. We need to mobilize as many people as possible in our church community to reach out to others.

We have several partnerships that continue to give purpose and meaning to both the giver and receiver. This Christian outreach includes, but is not limited to, our partnerships with the Navajo Lutheran Mission, Lutheran Thrift Store, various food distribution sites, and support to Pan de Vida worship community. It is amazing how a simple note or phone call can lift spirits. Instead of getting up each day and getting discouraged by the statistics of the horrendous virus, I encourage you to reach out and make a difference in some way; and perhaps through prayerful contemplation, one can be the hands and feet of Jesus in ways never done before. Some small token of appreciation may seem unimportant to you but to someone else perhaps it could change the way they are feeling about their life.

My recent idea was to start a Connections Calling Team, and I am pleased to say it is providing a renewed sense of giving and receiving to the glory of God. I have randomly asked people that have crossed my path in conversation whether they would be interested in taking a couple pages of names from the ALC Directory and making phone calls to people so we can stay connected as a Community of Believers. If they visit with someone who needs Pastoral Care, I have asked them to forward the name to me and I will follow up. I must say, I am elated at the response. If you want to be involved in this ministry, please contact me. We do not know what the future holds during this time of growing COVID-19 numbers and what it will mean for ALC in relation to in person worship and our other ministries. But we hope and pray God will guide us to make responsible decisions out of love for him and other people. Please try to be supportive and respectful to all who will be making difficult decisions as we move forward.

Advent Season is a time of waiting, and we focus on that especially at our Wednesday night Taizé service at 6 pm. We are prayerful and meditative as we worship quietly and contemplate

SCRIPTURE FOR THIS WEEKEND'S SERVICE

Lesson: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Psalm: Psalm 126

Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28

what waiting on the Lord means in our lives. On Monday, December 21, at 6 pm we will have a Blue Christmas service. This will provide a sacred space which will be a time for people living through dark times due to loss of any kind. It will be about reflection, acceptance of where we are, and holding out healing and hope.

We are also hosting a New-Member Class at 10 am on December 12th and 19th in Classroom A and B. Spread the word so that others may choose to be involved and join ALC. Please call the church if you would like to register for either of these.

May our efforts be a hallmark time in building up the Body of Christ inside and outside the walls of ALC. Let not our lessons on this pilgrimage be in vain. I have only been here for a year; but in this short time, I realize that ALC is a more caring community of believers than I had even imagined. Thanks for being part of this amazing partnership.

Love in Christ,
Pastor Judith Rainforth

STEPHEN MINISTRY COMMISSIONING

Pastor Gary Ulrich officiated at a Commissioning Service, Sunday, December 6th, to officially welcome new members to the Stephen Ministry Team. It was a limited but meaningful service for Candace Ryan, Kathy Skelding, Marie Pearson, Ron Pearson, Nancy Missling and Theresa Chesser as well as Owen Viker who was commissioned in absentia. Their families and Stephen Leadership members were present to witness and affirm their commissioning. Thank you to each of you for your willingness to be a blessing to others in this vital ministry.

Blessings,
Ann Skidmore

PHOENIX BOYS CHOIR

Over the past several years, ALC has hosted many Christmas concerts in our sanctuary that we have all enjoyed. This year, many concerts are being offered online. We have received a special invitation from The Phoenix Boys Choir to hear their upcoming virtual concert on Saturday, December 19th, at 3:00pm. More information may be found at:
<https://www.boyschoir.org/holiday>

BULK MAIL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Are you interested in volunteering for ALC from home? We need bulk mail volunteers for the foreseeable future for 2021. This involves picking up letters/supplies from the church office and returning them the next day. Please contact Oddey Hernandez at the church office by phone, 623.974.2512 or email, O.Hernandez@alcsuncity.org. Thank you!



2021 OFFERING ENVELOPES

The 2021 Offering Envelopes are ready! Due to COVID-19 precautions, the offering envelopes will be available in the Church Office for pickup from 8 am – 4 pm. Please call Elizabeth Borgman, our Receptionist, at 623-974-2512 for delivery arrangements if needed. Blessings all!