

The Evangel

Our mission is to lead people of all ages on the journey to become deeply devoted followers of Jesus.



New Lenten Series: Conversations with God

Join us on a six week journey of discovery as we explore and experience different approaches to prayer. If you have struggled to pray or feel you don't know how to pray; if your prayer life feels lifeless and stale, this series is for you. Begin or renew your practice of spending fruitful, helpful time with God every day. Begins Wednesday March 1 with our Ash Wednesday service and continues each Sunday through Easter.

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|---------------------------------|--|
| Wednesday, March 1
7:00 P.M. | Ash Wednesday
Admitting Who We Are Before God (Psalm 51) |
| Sunday, March 5 | The Perfect Prayer: Our Father (Matthew 6:9-13) |
| Sunday, March 12 | Simple Prayers for Anytime, Anywhere
(Luke 18:-9-14) |
| Sunday, March 19 | Let Your Body Pray (James 4:7-10)
Join us for a labyrinth walk on the grass |
| Sunday, March 26 | Praying the Questions (Mark 4:35-41) |
| Sunday, April 2 | Praying for Others (James 5:13-18) |
| Sunday, April 9 | The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly:
Praying the Psalms as Jesus Did (Psalm 22) |
| Sunday, April 16 | Easter Sunday
Prayers of Thanksgiving and Praise |



CHURCH OF GILBERT

331 S. Cooper Road

Gilbert, AZ 85233

480-892-9166

www.firstgilbert.church

Office Hours:

Monday—Thursday 8a—4p

Friday By Appointment

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Important Dates

03/01	Ash Wednesday
03/05	Spring Picnic
03/12	All Church Building and Construction Update
03/13	All Church Conference

Message from Pastor Deborah



March 1 is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the season of Lent. This season is a time of spiritual preparation before the observance of Christ's death on Good Friday and his resurrection on Easter Sunday. It is the holiest time of the year, and has always been a time when Christians set aside time for reflection, prayer, fasting, and other spiritual disciplines. We hope you will plan to join us for each of the special services throughout this season, including Ash Wednesday March 1, Maundy Thursday April 13, Good Friday April 14, and Easter Sunday April 16.

We are providing for your use a brochure that lists special ways you might choose to observe this Holy Season by practicing Spiritual Disciplines. Take a moment early in the season to reflect on how you would best deepen your relationship with God and your faith in Christ's love. Make a commitment to yourself and to God to include more time for prayer and reading of the Bible, and possibly fasting.

Throughout the season we will reflect together about various ways to pray in a sermon series titled Conversations with God. On Wednesday evenings you can join a class working through "Fifty Ways to Pray." It will stretch your understanding of what prayer is, when we pray, how we pray, why we pray.

We will have some special moments to experience different ways of praying. Wednesday March 1 sign up to pray as part of a prayer vigil. Spend 15 minutes offering prayers for our church and its people and its ministries in the world. Sunday March 19 we will have a prayer labyrinth spray painted on the lawn so that you can experience this ancient practice of movement prayers.

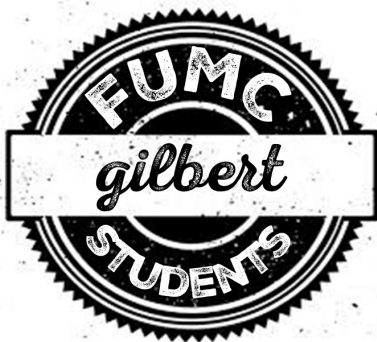
In worship we will offer weekly communion to those who attend at 8 a.m. If you find communion especially helpful, you might want to attend that service (or the one at 11) throughout Lent. It will be offered as usual on first Sundays at 9:30.

Paul writes in his letter to the Roman Church, Chapter 11 Verse 33: *"Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!"*

Spend some time exploring the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God this Lenten Season. You will be blessed beyond measure.

Blessings and Peace,

Pastor Deborah



Job Opening at First UMC Gilbert

First United Methodist Church of Gilbert is accepting applications for a full time Director of Youth and Family Ministries through Wednesday March 15, 2017.

Full job description is available in the church office at 331 S Cooper Rd, Gilbert AZ or through secretary@gilbertumc.org. Please send resume or summary of relevant experience plus a letter describing your call to youth ministry to pastordeborah@gilbertumc.org no later than 4 pm Wednesday March 15, 2017.

Message from Pastor Gwen

“Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.”
– Proverbs 16:24



The words we say to others have great power. They can lift up, or they can tear down. They can give hope, or bring discouragement. Our words can bring life, or they can do harm.

We have a basic right in our country to say whatever we want to say. But have you ever thought about the consequences of every word that comes from your pen or is released from your tongue? Saying the words that give hope and life takes intentionality, it doesn't come naturally. We have to work at it.

It brings me great comfort that the verse from Proverbs says “gracious words” and not “profound words” or “words that are longer than the English dictionary.” Thankfully, it is often simple and timely words that bring healing to a hurting person's heart.

Being careful about what we say is an act of love. It is lifting the other person's needs before our own. This is especially important today, a time in our church and in our country when there is a constant clamor of tactless words, Facebook rants and hateful headlines. We think we can change another's point of view on a subject in this way, but all we do is bring harm and division.

I recently read about the work of Jonas Kaplan, a cognitive neuroscientist at the University of Southern California. He has been studying how our brains react when our political beliefs are challenged. He and his colleagues performed MRI scans on the brains of forty participants, all of whom held strong political views. They monitored the brain activity as they presented counterarguments and tried to change the subject's political views. According to their findings, the part of the brain that was triggered controlled deep, emotional thoughts about the subject's identity. When they stimulated this part of the brain, the subjects felt challenged and defensive, shutting down their acceptance of counterarguments. I would be curious to see if this also applies to spiritual beliefs. But what this does tell me is that our words and how we speak them matter greatly. As Toby Mac says, “Speak love.”

During Lent many people are giving up something. For me, I am giving up speaking non-intentional, harmful words. It is my prayer that more and more of the words I speak bring life and hope. Would you like to join me?

May God grant you a holy Lent,
Pastor Gwen



Explorer Membership Luncheon March 12th 12:15pm Activity Center

Interested in joining the church? Or do you have questions regarding the process? This is a time when leaders will be available to answer your questions. This is the only class for those choosing to join.

Please respond by Thursday 3/9 to Sylvia at connection@gilbertumc.org or at 480-892-9166 including any child care needs.



Join us at 9:30am on Sundays as we learn to **FIX it UP** and **BUILD IT** through God's love and through forgiveness.

At 11am it is time for KIDZ Worship. This month the kids will be doing a forgiveness project.

Contact Janelle Chiriczio if you have any questions.

childrensministry@gilbertumc.org



All Church Building and Construction Update

Sunday March 12, 2017 after each worship service

9:00 and 10:30 in the Activity Center and at 12 in the Sanctuary

If you call First UMC home, even for a few months every year, please plan to join us for an all church update on our Building and Construction plans. Lay Leaders, Ad Board leaders, and members of the Building Committee will give you an update on our current status and answer any questions you have about our Building on the Past/Believing in the Future capital improvement initiative.

All Church Conference

Please join us for an All Church Conference Monday March 13 2017, 6:30pm in the Sanctuary. The purpose of this meeting is authorizing the sale of the property to the east/south of our church building and approve pastors salary. All persons are welcomed to come, those who are active members are permitted to vote.

The Adult Ministry Team is Looking For Your Feedback!

This survey is specifically designed to gather information about Sunday School attendance and content. Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete our survey!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FUMCGSundaySchool>



Preschool News ~ What's been happening?

Registration for 2017-2018

We are NOW enrolling students for next school year. Our preschool has classes for ages 2, 3, and 4/5 year olds! Check out our website and give us a call for a tour! We have a very exciting opportunity next year, an afternoon PreK, 12:15-2:45! Please share this information with a friend.

In February

In February, the preschoolers had a canned food drive. Each class was challenged to collect at least 20 cans of food! They were incredibly generous! Thank you! Also this time of year is beautiful and so fun for outside play! Our garden is growing and we love playing in the sand table!



Special Thank You!

During our February Happy Healthy Heart month, Therese Pineda visited us during chapel time to help us learn about how blood moves through passages in the heart, grabs oxygen, and then flows through out the body, all pushed through the heart!



This Month in March

March is a wonderful month full of sunshine and spring changes! Our PreK classes will celebrate their 100th day of school and at the end of the month we'll begin to observe caterpillars as they change into butterflies.

Spring Break

Enjoy your Spring Break this year! There will be no school from Monday, March 13th—Tuesday, March 21st. The first day back will be Wednesday, March 22nd.

If you have any questions about the preschool, please call Adrienne Mesa or Lora Norris, preschool directors at 480-892-9166.

It is Almost Camp Time!!

We now have information from Desert Southwest Conference UMC about this year's summer church camps.

This summer there are seven Elementary camps, five Junior High camps and five Senior High camps. There also is one fun camp for all ages as Mingus Mountain Camps celebrate its 70th year! For a complete listing of camp dates and details check out DSCCAMP.org.

When you take a look at the website make sure to see the different type of camps. There is a Horse Camp and this will be the second year for the Younger Elementary Camp which is shorter (2 nights) for K—3rd grade with one adult.

The Mingus Mountain Camp bus is available again this year. Campers will meet at the UMC 1550 E. Meadowbrook Avenue Phx, AZ 85014 for pick up and drop off. The cost for each one way bus ride to and from Mingus Mountain is \$25.

March 26th is Camp Sunday here at church!! There will be a lot of information available regarding camps and we will celebrate the spirit of camp with what else....SMORES!

Look What Your Giving Is Helping Us Do!

Thank you for your faithful and generous support of our church. During the month of February, your donations to the church's General Fund:



- Provided facilities for several Scout groups to meet weekly and carry out their activities. As we heard on Scout Sunday on February 12, 220 youth and 75 leaders are meeting in our classrooms and activity center each week. Included are members of our church family as well as people from our surrounding community. You may have noticed on Sunday the sanctuary was quite full with many of the scout families in attendance. 14 youth were recognized in worship for completing the God and Me program, and 10 youth completed the God and Family program. The volunteer Scout leaders who led these programs, who are also active members of our church, were recognized as well.
- Provided space and meals for four homeless Family Promise families the week of February 19-26. Many volunteers helped them feel welcome on our campus by setting up their sleeping rooms, making evening meals each day, leading fun evening activities with the families, purchasing food for the families' breakfast and lunch at the Family Promise Center, breaking down the sleeping rooms at the end of the week, and laundering bedding. Thank you to all our volunteers who helped make this a great week at our church!
- Provided space for our Preschool's registration for the next school year starting in August. 53 preschoolers were registered, along with 4 registered for the Parent Tot classes for our youngest students. Many of these families are new to our preschool and to experiencing our campus.

Without your gifts, we could not do this work which is all focused on our Mission "To Lead People of All Ages on the Journey to Become Deeply Devoted Followers of Jesus"!

2016 giving statements were emailed/mailed the first two weeks in January. If you have misplaced your statement and need another copy, please contact Taleen Carpenter, Financial Secretary (480-892-9166, financialsecretary@gilbertumc.org). Taleen is in the church office on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Please remember one of the easiest financial gifts you can make to our church is to donate a portion of your 2016 tax refund. Your gift will be used to continue and expand our church's ministry efforts as set forth in our 2017 budget.

January financial statement summaries are available in the church office. If you have any questions about the church's finances, or if you would like to receive a copy of the financial statements, please contact LeRoy Johnson, Finance Chair (Financechair@gilbertumc.org) or Deanna Helland, Church Treasurer/Accountant (480-892-9166, accountant@gilbertumc.org).

The QR code below is for giving via your mobile device. Or click on the GIVING link on our website to process your donation on-line. If you have any questions about on-line giving options, or if you need help setting up your on-line giving, please contact our Financial Secretary, Taleen Carpenter (480-892-9166, financialsecretary@gilbertumc.org) or Deanna Helland (480-892-9166, accountant@gilbertumc.org).



Lenten Disciplines

Lent is a time to prepare for Easter. I commit myself to the following disciplines for these 40 days, in order to experience the depth and power of the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior.

First check the ones you feel prompted to do. Then pray about it and circle the ones you will be able to follow through on.

INWARD AND PERSONAL DISCIPLINES

Become healthier, body, mind, and spirit:

- Spend time in solitude and prayer daily
- Fast from food one day a week. Give the time and money to Jesus
- Fast from a habit I need to give up
- Read twice through the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke & John
- Join the Wednesday class on Prayer
- Get enough healthy food, rest & exercise
- Reconcile with at least one person I am at odds with
- Attend all the Holy Week services as an act of love toward Jesus
- Inventory my priorities and reorder them in the light of Christ's love
- Try to make my lifestyle match my priorities
- Give up a grudge
- Forgive someone
- Worship every week
- Find a prayer partner
- Pray for my enemies

OUTWARD AND SOCIAL DISCIPLINES

Listen and respond to Christ's call to a ministry of service:

- Write a letter of affirmation once a week to someone who is not expecting it, or someone who has touched my life.
- Go to coffee or dinner with someone I want to know better
- Recycle
- Give blood and recall the cross
- Participate in serving a meal at the Watkins Center
- Say "no" to something that is a waste of money and time
- Pray for the courage to share my faith openly
- Decide to become a member of the church
- Rebuke the spirit of criticism and get my own tongue in control
- Pray with someone/for someone
- Bring an acquaintance to church on Palm Sunday and Easter
- Seriously consider the membership vows to support the church with "my prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness."

Others _____

As a way of being held accountable, I will find someone with whom I can covenant so that we can share our intentions and encourage each other's growth in Christ.

Signed _____

Easter Basket Collection

It is time once again for our Small Group Classrooms to help our Missions' team collect items for the Easter baskets that will be handed out to Sidewalk Sunday School. This is for kids in our community that need our help.

The Missions' team will be coming to talk to the kids about helping and what the items will be used for. This is a great way to help our kids share the good news with others. The older kids will also be able to help make the baskets that will be passed out. Thank you for supporting them in this mission moment.

Items need to be dropped off my March 19th.

Items Needed:

- Pre-K: mini bubbles
- K-1st: peeps
- 2nd-3rd: jelly beans
- 4th-6th: Easter grass and/or plastic eggs



Thank you from
FirstKIDZ and the
Missions Team!!

March Anniversary Celebrations

March 10th	Mark & Elizabeth Blackledge	15 Years
March 10th	Curt & Dina Reid	27 Years
March 11th	Stan & Miriam Gill	28 Years
March 15th	Bob & Anna Stearns	4 Years



March Birthday Celebrations

1st	Herb Miller	12th	Sue Dunning	16th	Brandi Vallera	20th	Susan Young
2nd	Sam Bouchie		Gavin Rempel	18th	Alexandria Bose	21st	Scott Hanson
4th	Hailey Houseman		Ainsley Snyder		Max Tesarek	23rd	Carley Palmer
6th	Nancy Moberg	14th	Adam La Point		Margie Zeilstra		Philip Tesarek
7th	Ashley Reynolds		Katelyn Mason	19th	Mollie Belcher	25th	Megan Spittell
8th	Katelyn Johns	15th	Nina Chiricuzio		Anna Stearns	26th	Bob Chuk
9th	Jonah Orndorff		Dina Reid	20th	Riley Mueller		Darline Moyer
10th	Robert De Bolt	16th	Sarah La Point		Albert Pineda	27th	Kevin Becker
						29th	Keegan Wilkins

Safe Sanctuary Training

Tuesday, March 7th 6pm in room 142

If you are in need of Safe Sanctuary training this will be the last chance to complete the training until May or June. Please contact Sylvia at connection@gilbertumc.org to sign up for the training.



Prayer Opportunities (Vigil, Prayer Chain and a Class)

On Wednesday, March 1st there will be a Prayer Vigil from 6:30am—6:30pm. You can sign up with Pastor Gwen for a 15 minute time of prayer. You can pray at the church or at your home, or a special prayer place. This is a great way to begin the Lenten season.

Anytime you would like to make a prayer request you can submit it via email to prayers@gilbertumc.org or let us know on the back of the yellow attendance card that is in every bulletin on Sundays.



Join us on Wednesday evenings, starting March 8th, as we begin to explore the topic of prayer and the many different ways to engage in an active prayer life. This new class is based on the book *50 Ways to Pray: Practices from Many Traditions & Times* by Teresa A. Blythe. It is a study that will encourage, guide, and help you develop a deeper, more meaningful prayer practice. If you have any questions please contact Sylvia at connection@gilbertumc.org.

We Need Palms

Palm Sunday is April 9th, we are in need of palms for our annual processional into the sanctuary. If you can donate some palms it would be greatly appreciated! Please call the church office if you could bring us some palms.

Family Promise THANK YOU!

The entire law is summed up in a single command:
"Love your neighbor as yourself."
Galatians 5:14

It takes many volunteers to host Family Promise for a week. A heartfelt thank you for sharing your time, donations and love with our special guests:

Sarah Metz, Reagan, Chloe & Leona
Katie Bouchie
Mel & Janice Clarry
Laura McCleod
Joyce Steiner
Ann Marie Smith
Dawn Harvey
Sherry Clack
Steve Hanson
Sandra Campbell
Beverly Stubbs
John & Jackie Holmberg
Trish O'Dell
Kelly & Michelle McClain

Glenda Ahlvers
MaryEllen Chuk
Becky Lewis
Craig & Chris Thompson
Malcolm Herring
Adriana Hernandez
Janelle Chiricuzio, Nina & Maia
Brian & DyAnn O'Brien
Marty & Elice Province
Mike & Diane Crann
Randy Reed & Margie Zeilstra
Ron Mason
Ray & Jenny Vallera, Hayley & Brandi
Our amazing Youth Group
and the many helpers with laundry



Coffee Hour Training

Come be a part of the coffee hour hosting team. We will be in the kitchen at 8 a.m. on both March 12th and March 19th to show you just how easy and fun it can be to serve your fellow church members. We all enjoy the coffee, goodies and fellowship time that the coffee hour provides us. So meet Al & Michelle Reynolds in the kitchen to serve up some fun.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call (480)370-4040 or email Michelle at kmichellereynolds@gmail.com.



Easter Lilies

Each year, the church places lilies on the altar at Easter as a way of remembering and/or honoring a loved one, family member or friend. Names of those remembered or honored will be printed on a bulletin insert on Easter Sunday.

The cost of each Easter lily is \$15.00. Order forms and payments may be placed in the collection plate, mailed or brought to the church office **no later than Sunday, April 9th**. Please make your checks payable to First UMC Gilbert, with "lilies" in the memo line.

Lilies may be taken home after the 11:00 service on Easter morning.

Order forms are available in the church office and in the bulletin each week from 3/5 to 4/9.



Meet Our Lay Leaders

So what is a Lay Leader, and what does he/she do?

The United Methodist Discipline has a long list of responsibilities listed under the lay leader position for the local church. Lay leaders are elected by the Charge Conference for three year terms. In our church we presently have 4 lay leaders, Kelly McClain, Michelle McClain, Gary McGrath, and Kitty McGrath.

Here are a few of the things a lay leader does:

- Meets with the pastor regularly to share information about the church to advance its mission and ministries.
- Gathers the thoughts of the congregation on church issues and shares those thoughts with the pastors, staff and other church leaders.
- Attends church meetings, such as the church council, charge conferences and Finance Committee.
- Continually studies to be better prepared to support discipleship and the development of church ministries.



Lay leaders are a resource for you. They know about the many activities of the church and can help you find answers to questions you might have.

Now Hiring Summer Camp Staff

Mingus Mountain Camp & Retreat Center is hiring staff for the summer season (May 20-August 1, 2017). The United Methodist Camp is located north of Prescott Valley. Responsibilities include preparing and maintaining camp facilities and grounds, leading recreational activities including archery and high and low ropes courses (certification and training provided), assisting the food service program, operating the camp store, providing camper supervision and activities on the bus to and from camp, leading four staff devotionals (materials provided), and overseeing weekend group activities.



- A current food handlers card is required.
- Lodging and meals are provided. \$10/hr, 40-50 hrs/wk.

Contact Mike Crevelt, Mingus Mountain Camp Director, at 928-634-5273 or mingus@huges.net for more information or to apply.

Congregational Care

Excitement abounds in Congregational Care! We are in the process of training nine Congregational Care Ministers to work along with the pastors in providing care to the church and nine new Stephen Ministers who will be available for one-to-one caring listening. These persons will be commissioned in May. We are also beginning another Congregational Care Minister training class which will meet on Thursdays beginning March 23rd at 6:30pm in Room 200. This class will be completed the end of May and commissioning will be in June. If you would like to become a Congregational Care Minister we invite you to fill out an application. Applications and a list of the requirements are available in the church office or by contacting pastorgwen@gilbertumc.org. Our needs are great and we would like to reach a deeper level of care. We hope to raise up an army of care givers!





Lay Servant Ministry Training Schedule

The purpose of Lay Servant Ministries is to enlist, train, guide and support lay servants as they equip and prepare others “for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12). Lay Servant Ministries is deeply embedded in the history of United Methodism, as John Wesley realized the laity could be effective leaders of meetings throughout the church. Roles included leadership in preaching and conducting worship but also leadership in leading studies, visiting the sick and imprisoned. Lay Servants were encouraged to “watch over one another with love.”

The three tenets of Lay Servant Ministries are LEADING, CARING, and COMMUNICATING in mission and ministry within and beyond the United Methodist Church. Upcoming training dates are:

March 10 & 11

Christ Community UMC, Avondale
Basic Course – Intro to Lay Servant Ministry
Leading Bible Study

April 21 & 22

Red Mountain UMC, Mesa
Leading in Prayer
Conflict Resolution

May 12 & 13

Sunrise UMC, Phoenix
Basic Course – Intro to Lay Servant Ministry
Discover Your Spiritual Gifts

Training is offered every month except June and December in the East and West Districts. Events begin Friday evening with dinner at 5:30 PM and conclude at 5:0 PM on Saturday. For more information please go to: <https://dscumc.org/lay-servant-ministries-training-sessions/>



Welcome Help Needed

Looking for additional help at the church Welcome Cart on Sunday mornings.

Contact Sylvia at connection@gilbertumc.org if you are interested!

Hello Spring Picnic

Sunday, March 5th 3pm-6pm at our Church Campus

Come join Family Ministries for the annual Church and Family Picnic! Bring your families, friends a blanket and chair. Enjoy festivities like music, face-painting, bouncy house, three legged races and more!

The church is providing chicken, drinks and rolls. Asking folks with last names A-G to bring salads, H-S sides and T-Z to bring desserts.



Vacation Bible School

Save the date on your calendar! Vacation Bible School is coming to First UMC Gilbert June 5th—June 9th 2017! Invite your neighbors, family friends and kiddos in your kid’s school classes. This is going to be fun!!

First UMC Gilbert Youth News

During the month of March, the youth will be starting a new series called "Deal With It". This series talks about when you face a challenge, attacking the challenge is a better option than avoiding it. These discussions take place on Sunday mornings in the Youth Room (140/141).



Facebook has been updated with pictures from the "Vivid" 2017 Winter Camp trip. The kids had a wonderful time and the pictures reflect just a small portion of the fun, fellowship and spiritual events of the weekend.

On March 12th, the Youth team will be sharing testimony on last years Mission Trip experiences. This is a time of blessing for the congregation and the youth to share their personal experiences. We need three youth (one per church service) to volunteer.

Excited for a Youth Dance on March 26th! It is being hosted by Paradise Valley UMC. Watch the weekly Youth Newsletter for more details coming out soon.

April 16th is Easter Sunday and we will not have Youth Group on that morning or evening. Please spend this time in worship with your family!

For any questions you may have regarding Youth programming please contact Ray at youthministry@gilbertumc.org.

