

The Evangel

December 2017



Merry Christmas!

Join us Sunday, December 24th

Morning Services at 9:30 and 11:00 am

Christmas Eve Candlelight Celebrations

4:00 pm
Family Service

6:00 & 8:00 pm
Traditional Lessons and Carols
with Organ and Choir
Professionally Staffed Nursery
(For children through age 3, ONLY at 6pm)

10:00 pm
Traditional Lessons and Carols
with Handbells and Holy communion
(Pre-Service Music by the Wesleyan Bells at 9:30)



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

December 2	Decorating
December 3	Youth Party
December 10	Choir Contata Chili & Caroling
December 24	Christmas Eve Services

Message from Pastor Deborah

It seems impossible that the Christmas season is upon us, but the day after Thanksgiving has long been the day when I put up the tree and other decorations in my home. From that moment on, it's time for Christmas.



It is such a wonderful season. I love the lights and the beautiful decorations in shopping malls. I love the lovely trimmings we will put up in the sanctuary on December 2. I love the carols, the anticipation and the luminarias on Christmas Eve.

More than anything else I love thinking about the incarnation: the miracle of the Lord of the Universe coming down to earth to let us see what love looks like. I never grow tired of the story: Mary, the young girl who says Yes to God. Joseph the faithful one who does not leave her alone in a hard time. The long, hard journey. The cold hearted town that had no room. The inn that finally became the humble birthing suite for the baby would save us. The best story ever!

It is an occasion worthy of gifting and celebration. However, sometimes I wonder if our gifts and celebrations reflect the reality of the story. We bring out the fine china and the best of everything to celebrate a baby lying in a dirty manger. We pile gifts to the sky as if it were our birthday, and that of our children and grandchildren, instead of His. We use our precious time and energy to acquire things that will be of value for only a short time, instead of using them to deepen our love relationships with family and friends and neighbors. We focus on ourselves and our own families, not on a world that is so needful of this baby's loving salvation.

This is an invitation to re-think your Christmas practice. Over the last few years I have worked to simplify our family gatherings, focusing more on the time we have together than the number of things under the tree. It's easier now that my children are all adults. But the temptation is always there to buy one more thing, and one more, and this one, and that one....and to suffer the terrible financial hangover that January brings.

I think we need to support each other in this if we are to be successful. Perhaps something along the lines of AA, or OA, except in the realm of shopping and spending. Let's be honest with one another about the struggle to keep up with the Jones's, and what it does to our bank accounts and our credit card balances. Let's do a rigorous accounting of the effects of our overspending/overbuying/overdoing the glitz and glamor of Christmas. Let's confess our addiction to stuff, and our powerlessness to let it go, without the intervention of a higher power. And together let's find a different way, one step at a time, to create a Christmas that befits a humble baby in a manger, the very Lord of the Universe, and the Lord of our lives.

Along the way, let's find ways to make this season easier for our brothers and sisters who have suffered a loss, or who have no family; those who will have no gifts and maybe not even a tree. Let's share ourselves with those who are lonely and alone, for the sake of this baby who shared himself so completely for and with us.

Merry Christmas. May these days be filled with blessings, hope, joy, peace, and love.

Pastor Deborah

'Tis The Season



Join us for the Advent and Christmas Season

Saturday December 2

8:30 A.M. Decorate the Worship Center with us!

Bring the family for a time of music, doughnuts, and the labor of love that makes our sanctuary beautiful for the holidays.

All are welcome!

Sunday December 3

New Sermon Series "Down to Earth" Begins

"Down to Earth Love"

Full Communion in all services

The Lord of the Universe, as a vulnerable babe, entered into our struggles and in so doing chose willingly to humble himself as a down to earth God.

Sunday December 10

Special Musical Presentation with Orchestra at 8 and 9:30

"A Festival of Lessons and Carols" by John Leavitt

Join us at 11:00 to complete your morning with a message

"Down to Earth Humility"

Chili and Caroling Information

Sunday December 17

"Down to Earth Lifestyle"

Sunday December 24

Morning Services at 9:30 and 11:00 ONLY

Pastor Gwen preaching

Candlelight Celebrations at 4, 6, 8, and 10 pm

Live Nativity from 4:30 – 7:30

Watch for a flyer in the bulletin you can share with friends and neighbors!



Sunday, December 10 at 12:15

Activity Center

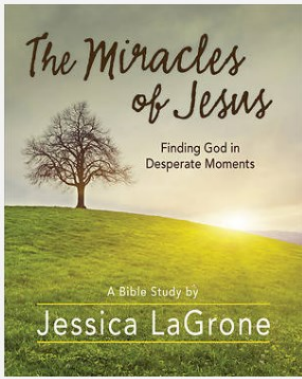
Join us to learn more about our church.

We would love to welcome you!

Lunch is provided.

RSVP to Sylvia at connection@gilbertumc.org.

Tuesday Morning Women's Bible Study



We are enjoying our study of The Miracles of Jesus by Jessica LaGrone. In this 6-week DVD-based study, we will explore the miracles of Jesus, helping us to see that our weakness is an invitation for God to work powerfully in our lives and reminding us that we need God on our best days just as much as we do on our worst. Books are \$11.00 each and are available at the study. Feel free to join us at any time! Please contact Christy Robertson Yoder at roberch1@yahoo.com or Deanna Helland at dzhelland@yahoo.com with any questions.

Free childcare is provided

THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH

Thanksgiving 2017 became a little more special for 110 families thanks to the contributions of this congregation. We want to thank all those who supported this year's Turkey Dinner Drive. Though the hard work of those who mapped addresses, made calls, worked the donation table and delivered the meals we were able to distribute 110 turkey dinners. Through your great generosity we were able to raise over \$4,100.00 to pay for these meals to families in need. Thank you for your service!

Organist Position Filled

The Staff Parish Relations Committee, Pastor Deborah, and the search committee headed by Music Director Dr. Martin Province are pleased to announce that we have conducted auditions for the position of organist and have selected Suzanne C. Hunter. Ms. Hunter is an experienced former music educator with strong collaboration and interpersonal communication skills. She is a lifelong accompanist on both piano and organ with a large repertoire in a variety of musical styles. She is experienced in liturgical worship as well as contemporary styles. In addition to her skills as a pianist and organist, she is an accomplished soprano with a concentration in vocal performance in her degree in music education.

Ms. Hunter played for our choir rehearsal November 15 and was our worship organist on November 19. We warmly welcome her to the role of principal organist and accompanist for First United Methodist Church of Gilbert. She will begin serving our congregation Jan 1, 2018.



Congregational Care Christmas Luncheon Party

Saturday, December 16th - 11:30-1:00

Activity Center

A thank you luncheon for those who have contributed to our Congregational Care Ministry this past year!

Please RSVP to care@gilbertumc.org

or 480-892-9166

Adopt a Deserving Family for Christmas



Would you or your family, or your small group, be interested in purchasing gifts for a deserving family who is facing financial hardship this Christmas or could use a little encouragement? If so, contact Pastor Gwen at care@gilbertumc.org or call 480-892-9166. Congregational Care maintains confidentiality by delivering all gifts.

Congregational Care Minister Renewal & Training Retreat

January 26-28

Franciscan Renewal Center

Scottsdale

Worship with the Gospel Grass

Please see Pastor Gwen if you are interested in becoming a Congregational Care Minister!



FUMC- Gilbert Youth

December 2017

YOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTY -*Sunday, December 3rd, 1:30-4:00 pm

(\$5 entry) Meet at Pollack Tempe movie theater. We'll watch a Christmas movie (determined by audience) and also be offering awards for: -Most Festive Outfit, -Tackiest Christmas Outfit (can't be the same as the above), -Cheeriest Youth Group.

Phoenix Inner City Holiday Toy Drive 11/19-12/8

We'll be collecting unwrapped toys & gifts on the patio and in the office during business hours for our December 9th Party. If you feel blessed already consider asking your parents to donate a gift instead of receiving another 1 from them. Each child at the party only gets 1 present.

Saturday December 9th - Meira House Party 7am-3pm

Our 3rd year we're participating in the downtown Phoenix Inner City Holiday Toy Drive and Block Party. The event benefits children who are less fortunate to receive gifts during the holidays. The group that served last year raved about how much of a blessing this was for them thru helping other kids.

Sunday 12/10 No Youth gathering- Chili n Caroling Party 5-7 pm

Come enjoy chili, hay rides & caroling, and much more.

Sunday Evening December 24th and December 31st- No Official Evening Youth Gathering due to the Holidays.

Around the Corner:

CONFIRMATION

Confirmation Classes for 7th-12th graders starting January 7, 2018 on Sunday afternoon's from 3-4 pm. **RSVP with Ray by 12/17/17 @ 5pm to save your seat.**

****Summer 2018 Mission Trips:**

Junior High trip will be going to serve with YouthWorks in San Diego, Ca. July 1st -7th.

Senior High trip will be serving with SSP in Tsale, Az July 8th -14th.

We will have a parent & youth meeting with more information on the trips and youth gatherings soon. Watch youth news for the announcement.

If you have any questions about Youth or Family Ministries, please contact Ray Vallera at youthministry@gilbertumc.org or 602-291-1968.

FIRST KIDZ - December Curriculum



Preschool

Hello, First Look Friends!

Can you believe it's that time of year again? Time to decorate, bake cookies, buy gifts, sing carols. And, in our world, it's time to teach preschoolers the true story of Christmas—the story of when God gave us Jesus—the best gift ever!

Every year, this story is retold. God sends an angel to tell Mary the good news. Jesus is born. The angels tell the shepherds. And, once they see baby Jesus, they tell everyone! Then the wise men come and worship God's Son.

If we're not careful, we can easily forget that the story we've heard a million times is brand new for many of the preschoolers who will be hearing for the first time this year.



Elementary and Pre-Teens

Every good and perfect gift comes from God.

In fact, generosity is at the very core of God's character—He even gave us His own son, Jesus! Jesus showed unwavering generosity as He traded His life for ours. And, because God gave us Jesus and Jesus gave His life, we can be generous towards others. Not only that, but when we are generous towards others, we prove that we love God by loving the people He loves. We pray that this Christmas, as kids celebrate God's amazing generosity, they'll see how they can be generous with their family, friends, and neighbors.



December offering for FIRSTKIDZ:

TOY Drive: As a whole Unite PHX (A united group of churches and nonprofits) are trying to collect 3,000 toys this year for kids in downtown PHX! 1,500-2000 will go to the Christmas in Garfield party on the 9th. Everything over that will be go out to local refugee families, Navajo, Gila, Apache and Hopi churches that we support and other local ministries. Please bring in a new toy by December 3rd instead of an offering during large group!



Pick up pageant Christmas 2017



On December 24th at 4 pm, FirstKidz will be helping to host the family service here at FUMC of Gilbert! Come experience the joy and help us with the retelling of the Christmas story. There is a part for everyone! Afterwards join us outside for a sweet treat and a live nativity!

Merry Christmas!

Wednesday Wilds/Wednesday Book Club - 6:30 pm

The last night for this fall's program is December 13th. We'll be watching "The Voyage of the Dawn Treader."

For information about Children's Ministry contact Janelle Chiricuzio at childrensministry@gilbertumc.org.



Look What Your Giving is Helping Us Do!

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

Provided meeting space and support for Gilbert's Interfaith Thanksgiving Service on November 21. Our Music Director, Marty Province, led our choir in providing some of the inspirational music shared in the service, and 3 members of our church spoke about their Thankful Moments. Over 100 people from various faith communities came together to express gratitude for their many blessings.

Provided space and support for a new Journey 101 class starting on November 5. 7 people have started this 18-week course, led by Mike Miller, as the next step after completing the Alpha course.

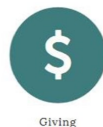
Provided for our annual pledge campaign to support the operating budget of the church. Extravagant Generosity was the theme, chaired by Kim Harding with assistance from Tommy Campbell. Pastor Deborah and Pastor Tina gave sermons on generosity, and pledges were turned in on November 19. As of 11/21, 86 pledges have been received for a total of over \$400,000. Thank you for your extravagant generosity. If you were unable to submit your pledge on November 19, you can still send or bring it into the church office. Your pledge helps us plan all of our great ministries that make a difference in the lives of our members, friends, community and world.

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"!

October 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, Treasurer/Church Accountant (480-892-9166, accountant@gilbertumc.org).

Did you know our church just added Give by Text to our menu of electronic giving options? Text the amount you want to give, including the dollar sign (for example, \$10) to 480-712-1057. You will receive a text with the registration link. Click the link and enter your contact and credit or debit card information. You will receive a verification by text and a receipt via email. For future gifts, just send a text with your gift amount and it will process automatically.

You can also use the Joyfully2UMC giving app or the QR code below 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 electronic giving options, or if you need help setting it up on your phone, tablet or computer, please contact our Financial Secretary, Taleen Carpenter (480-892-9166, financialsecretary@gilbertumc.org) or Deanna Helland (480-892-9166, accountant@gilbertumc.org).



December Anniversaries

11	Ramirez, Lydia & Matt	6
20	Hemingson, Jeff & Jeni	14
21	La Point, Sarah & Adam	3
21	Stressman, Ed & Pam	49
28	Griffith, Mike & Wendy	34



December Birthday Celebrations

1	Roberta Johnson	10	Linda Allen	21	Sharon Poeske
1	Ruby Rosemond-Taylor	12	Christina Robertson Yoder	27	Elisa Tinsley
4	Diana Ramsey	13	Robin Lee	28	Sylvia Harris
5	Jo Asplin	14	Ernie Broughton	29	Emily Tognacci
5	Ashley West	17	Jaron Mason	30	Phyllis Petrone
5	Ray Crawley	17	Judith Pierce		
7	Virginia Franklin	19	Jonell Woolsey		
8	Michael Castle	20	Steve Kopp		
8	Miriam Gill	20	Sherri Phelps		
8	Al Reynolds	20	Adam Sukis		

Adult Education Classes coming in January!

Wednesday classes with meal in Activity Center at 5:45pm beginning January 10th.

Financial Peace University – Begins Wednesday, January 24th 6:30-8:00pm. The class will run until March 28th, with no class on March 14th. Register online or in the church office. You can pick up your class materials in the church office. The class will be led by Janet Bose.

The following classes begin January 10th:

Disciple I Bible Study – Continues from the fall sessions. Led by Molly Hahn.

Journey 101 (new class)- Know, Love, and Serve God. This class is foundational to the Discipleship Journey and initiates life-long spiritual practices that help us grow in our faith. (Prerequisite: Alpha)

Journey 101 (continued) – Class continues from fall sessions with the Love God and Serve God modules. It is being led by Mike Miller. (Prerequisite: Alpha)

Unshakable Trust - Find the Joy of Trusting God at All Times, in All Things by Joyce Meyer – led by Christine Bayer, this class will be using the book and workbook with discussion format.

Journey 202 Classes – determined by 101 participant strength finder from options below. (Prerequisite Journey 101)

Serving From the Heart – (spiritual gifts)

Becoming a Contagious Christian – (how to share your faith)

Three Simple Rules – (love, caring and justice)

Follow Me – (Following Jesus as a lifelong calling)

Five Practices of Fruitful Living – (passionate practices that transform us)

Thursday classes with a meal in classrooms at 6:00pm beginning January 11th.

The Alpha Course – for those who cannot attend on Wednesdays, here is an option for your participation. The Alpha Celebration Dinner will be held on Thursday, January 11th at 6:00pm, and the new class begins on Thursday, January 18th. A meal is served with each class session.



Journey 303 – (prerequisite Journey 202)

Leadership Essentials – Practical Tools for Leading in the Church
(coming in Spring 2018)

Preschool News

www.gilbertpreschool.com



LEGACY WALL

Thanks to all of the students and families who participated in our Legacy Wall fundraiser! Our good friend Steve Losey hung the tiles over Fall Break. It looks amazing!

“Preschool Fall Festival – The Circus”- On Oct. 26th in our Activity Center, 70 preschoolers and their families enjoyed dinner together and played carnival games. Then our preschoolers performed 3 songs for their audience. What an amazing night! Thank you to our committee members who helped with this event, we appreciate you! Thank you to many preschool alumni for helping out with the games!



What's coming up?

This November, we'll talk about all the things that we are thankful for! We'll learn about the letters T and A and make Thanksgiving placemats. The PreK students enjoy a feast together with their parents. They share what they are thankful for and snack on Friendship Mix. In December, we'll have our annual Christmas program in the sanctuary. Join us on December 14th at 6:30pm for sweet Christmas songs to celebrate the season!

Our Christian Preschool will encourage your child to develop spiritually, emotionally, socially, mentally and physically.

We are committed to providing a loving Christian learning enrichment program for preschool aged children. Our preschool will give them encouragement and confidence to transition successfully into kindergarten programs. God has created each child with unique abilities, special talents and individual needs. We believe that each child should be provided an opportunity to develop each of these areas in a Christian environment.

www.gilbertpreschool.com



..... Spreading God's Love

Building on the Past/ Believing in the Future Updates

Your Building on the Past/Believing in the Future Capital Campaign team is pleased to announce that at the mid point of our capital campaign (18 months in to a 36 month campaign) we have received \$567,075.07 of our total campaign goal of \$1,096,176.16, as of November 14, 2017. Thank you for your faithfulness!

The trustees have used these funds to completely re-roof our sanctuary (we even purchased all new tiles, as the old ones crumbled upon removal) and to purchase a new air conditioning unit for the south side of the sanctuary, as well as repairs and replacements to air conditioning components on the north side of the sanctuary. These were “unexpected” expenses that could be readily funded because of your faithful giving. Again, thank you for your faithfulness!

We anticipate starting the renovation of the sanctuary immediately after Christmas. We will start the new year with a new look in our worship space. We are excited and looking forward to these enhancements.

Land Sale Update

The land sale committee continues to monitor the progress of our potential buyer. He was granted an additional 90 days of due diligence, which will end around March 26, 2018, because of the scale of his project and the need to have extensive engineering for the water retention area. We are pleased to know that he is presenting the initial phases of his project to the town of Gilbert in late November and has completed the initial designs of the townhome units. He continues to invest deeply in this project and we are confident that the project will move forward. At the end of the due diligence period, in first quarter of 2018, when we are more certain of receiving the funds from this sale, we expect to begin working to obtain construction loans for the major building project.

Building on the Past / Believing in the Future Building Committee

This team is meeting with architect and construction manager at risk, Concord, to adjust the designs to fit within our budget. Key decisions about finishes are being considered and made at regular monthly meetings. Keep this group in your prayers as we move forward!

**First United Methodist Church of Gilbert
331 S. Cooper Road Gilbert, AZ 85233
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Like us on Facebook or Check In that you are here!
<http://www.facebook.com/FUMCofGilbert>**

FOR MOBILE GIVING

