

# The Evangel

November 2017



*Happy Thanksgiving !*

## Join us for the following special activities:

### All Saints Sunday November 5, 2017

On All Saints Sunday we will honor all those who call First UMC home who graduated to glory in the last twelve months, and light a candle in their memory, in each of the services. Join us.

### Veterans Day Observance Sunday November 12

Saturday November 11 is Veteran's Day. We will honor those among us who have served in any branch of the military on Sunday November 12, as well as giving thanks to their families. Veterans are invited to wear their uniforms so that we can recognize and thank them for their service.

### Thanksgiving Week

#### Sunday November 18, 2017 - Thanksgiving Sunday

Join us for this day of thanksgiving and praise, as we gather to express our gratitude for all God has done and is doing for us day by day!

#### Tuesday November 21 - Interfaith Thanksgiving Service 7:00 P.M.

We gather with friends and neighbors from faith communities around us to raise hearts and voices in praise and thanksgiving!

#### Thursday November 23 - Thanksgiving Day Service 9:00 A.M.

Put the turkey in the oven and join us for a brief service of thanksgiving with our praise band leading and Philip Tesarek preaching.



331 S. Cooper Road

Gilbert, AZ 85233

480-892-9166

[www.firstgilbert.church](http://www.firstgilbert.church)

Office Hours:

Monday—Thursday 8a—4p

Friday By Appointment

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### Important Dates

November 5 - All Saints Sunday
November 10 - Veterans Day (Office Closed)
November 21 - Interfaith Thanksgiving Service
November 22 - Thanksgiving
November 23-24 Office Closed



## ***Message from Pastor Deborah***

November is one of my favorite months of the year. We can count on cooler days and nights, which refresh the spirit and body. We're not yet into the whirlwind of activities and preparation for Christmas. In contrast to other times of the year, in this one month we are encouraged even by our culture to be grateful and give thanks.

What is it that fills your heart with joy? Where are you experiencing the goodness and grace and love of God in your life, and that of your family? In our worship services we have already begun to invite you to think of the ways this church has blessed your life. Sunday November 5 we will celebrate All Saints Day, honoring those who have graduated to glory in the last year. It is a fitting Sunday to ask you to give thanks for those persons whose life and faith have touched your life and faith. Who has shaped your journey toward Christ?

Every Sunday when we gather we give thanks for the greatest blessing of all, remembering John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he GAVE his only son, so that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life," and Ephesians 5:25b-26 "Christ loved the church, and gave himself up for her."

When we gather it is always in gratitude for the gift of abundant life, also translated "eternal" life, that is ours in Christ Jesus. Everything we have, and everything we are, comes from God.

This month we are inviting you to consider how much God has given to you, and to respond in gratitude and love. On November 19 we will give you an opportunity to express your love and gratitude in a tangible way, by offering to God and to this church an estimate of your giving for 2018. This is a practical matter, in that it enables your finance team to set a budget for the coming year. Much more deeply, it is a spiritual matter. Along the way we hope you will use the free devotional guide, "Practicing Extravagant Generosity," which has been available in the church lobby for the last two weeks.

The materials we are using to guide our messages poses this question: "If God owns it all, why should I give?" The answer it suggests? "Because giving...expresses your **love for God**; is a sign of your **gratitude** to God; makes you a **partner with God**; **honors God** as your provider; results in your **spiritual growth**; **changes** your heart and **pleases God**."

I think they have it right! I hope you will join us each week as we continue our reflections on gratitude, giving, and Extravagant Generosity, which flows from a grateful and loving heart.

Blessings and Peace

Pastor Deborah

### **November Sermon Series - Extravagant Generosity**

**November 5 - The Art of Love: Relationships are Matters of the Heart**

**November 12 - Bucket Lists: Vision and Hope are Inspirations of the Heart**

**November 19 - Declaring Your Heart-Extravagant Generosity is an Expression of Your Heart**

## ***A Word from Pastor Gwen:***

*“The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” - John 3:8*

Lately, I have been thinking about the illogical nature of God. About how illogical it is that God our King would choose to become a baby, born into a poor family, empty of power, taking the form of a slave. About how illogical it is that God would chose to die the death of a criminal to save an undeserving and unresponsive humanity, to pour out His grace on people, even people like me. How illogical it is that God’s plan to transform the world was by sending the Spirit into the hearts of everyday, imperfect people, and having us die to ourselves in order to live. It all sounds so . . . illogical!

But isn’t that just the way God usually works? God acts outside the confines of human experience and wisdom, doing the greatest acts in the strangest ways. God seems to be very good at turning things upside down to make them right side up.

So when we pray, God does what he usually does, answering our prayers in ways that surprise us! God answers in ways far exceeding anything we could ever ask or think. And I love that about God! I love the way God surprises us! I love the unpredictable nature of the Holy Spirit. I love that I can loosen my grip on defining the future and trust that God will do His creative work.

In his book *Draw the Circle*, Mark Batterson writes, “I’m still in awe of the strange and mysterious ways in which God works, but I have come to expect the unexpected because God is predictably unpredictable. The only thing I can predict with absolute certainty is this: the more you pray, the more you will experience holy surprises.”

Would you pray with me that God would surprise us in illogical ways as we move into the Holiday seasons of Thanksgiving and Christmas? Would you pray with me that God would work in strange ways to do great things in and through our church? Let’s pray that we would experience God’s holy surprises each day. What do you say?

Expecting the illogical,

Pastor Gwen

## **Report on our 2017 Charge Conference**

Our District Superintendent, the Rev. Susan Brims, and our District Lay Leader, Paul Brown, joined us Monday October 16 for our annual charge conference. We had many joyous things to celebrate about the ways God is working in and through our congregation. One of the best was approving two new candidates for ministry, Sylvia Harris and Sharon Kotsonas, and reaffirming our approval of Adriana Hernandez, who became a candidate last year. These persons are responding to the call of God upon their lives, and it is an honor and privilege to have as part in their realization of that call.

We also approved Philip Tesarek as a certified Lay Servant. Philip preached at First UMC on New Year’s Day last year. He will preach our 9:00 A.M. service on Thanksgiving Day.

Sharon will bring the message to all three services on the Sunday following Thanksgiving, November 26. Sylvia will be our preacher for the Sunday following Christmas, Sunday December 31. Be here to support these persons as they move forward toward all God has for them to do and be, and be sure to express your encouragement and blessing on this journey.





**Sunday, November 12 at 12:15**

**Activity Center**

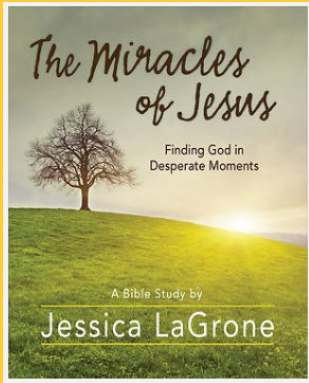
**Join us to learn more about our church.**

**We would love to have you!**

**Lunch is provided.**

**RSVP to Sylvia at [connection@gilbertumc.org](mailto: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](mailto:roberch1@yahoo.com) or Deanna Helland at [dzhelland@yahoo.com](mailto:dzhelland@yahoo.com) with any questions.**

**Free childcare is provided**

### **A new Adult Class will be starting soon on Wednesday nights!**

A study of the book *When God Doesn't Fix It* by Laura Story will begin Wednesday, November 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm and end on December 13<sup>th</sup>. The five session class is being facilitated by Sherry Clack. In this study we will be looking at how God may not fix everything in our lives, but uses the crises we go through to bring us closer to Him and to lead us to a better place. To sign up, call the church office at 480-892-9166.



### **Update on Organist Search**

We have advertised our organist position widely and have received a number of qualified applicants. We will continue to receive applications through Monday November 6. A team has been gathered with our Music Director, Dr. Martin Province, as leader, to vet these applications and choose the two top applicants. These two will be invited to "sub" for us: to attend a Wednesday rehearsal with an interview following, then play for our two Sunday services. We feel this will be the best way to fully assess their fit for our congregation. With the uncertainty about the sanctuary renovation we aren't sure which two Sundays we will have available but hope to have this selection made before Christmas.

In the meantime we will enjoy the music of Kevin DeYeager on November 5 and Norma Mayne throughout the remainder of our search (perhaps including Christmas). Margaret Knoll will accompany the choir through this time and will play for our Family Service at 4 P.M. on Christmas Eve. We are deeply grateful for these two fine musicians who have stepped forward to offer their gifts in this time of transition. Please thank them!



*Are you interested in becoming a Congregational Care Minister? Applications are due to the church office by November 1st to be considered for the January 26-28 training. Application forms and requirements are available at the Welcome Cart, the church office or online at [www.firstgilbert.church](http://www.firstgilbert.church).*

## ***Congregational Care Support Groups For Those Going Through Grief***



**Grieving the loss  
of someone close to you?**  
Find comfort and support at GriefShare

Saturdays 9:00am – 10:30am

1st Gilbert United Methodist Church

331 S Cooper Rd, Gilbert AZ 85233

480/892-9166 or 480/980-3053

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

You can join at any time

**The new Grieving Moms online group** is now open for registration. Visit [www.grievingmoms.com](http://www.grievingmoms.com) to register. The start date is Tuesday, November 7th at 6:30 PST. The course is 12-weeks and will meet online every Tuesday evening. Please share with a Mom who has suffered the untimely death of a child. For more information please contact Sharon Kotsonas at [sharonkotsonas@gmail.com](mailto:sharonkotsonas@gmail.com) or 480.223.7863.



### ***Medical Lending Closet***

Do you have items in good shape that you could donate to the Medical Lending Closet? We are in the process of upgrading some of our equipment. If you have any questions about your donation, please contact Therese Pineda at 602-686-1259.



# **FUMC- Gilbert Youth**

**November 2017**

## **Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> - November 5<sup>th</sup> - WREATH SALES**

Youth will be out on the patio selling wreath items to raise money for our youth events and trips. Any 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade Youth wishing to raise funds for their mission trip should participate.

## **Friday, November 10 - WINTER JAM 2017**

Gila River Arena- \$15 cash entry. 10 artists perform each night, so you get to enjoy approximately 4 hours of show time! Artist: Lecrae, Mac Powell, Andy Mineo, Building 429, Family Force 5, Newsong, Moriah Peters, Nick Hall and more.

## **Saturday, November 11<sup>th</sup> – UMOM monthly meal @ \*New Halle Center**

Serving crew limited to 8 people, all volunteers must be 14 years or older, and they will not allow us to give away clothes or toiletries anymore, we will donate them to their distribution rooms. Rsvp to Ray or Ron Mason.

## **National Youth Workers Convention November 16-19<sup>th</sup>**

Ray will be away attending this event. Veterans Day weekend, No Sunday evening gathering.

## **Sunday, November 26<sup>th</sup> - downtown Gilbert walk and eat event**

Students and adults meet at the church before walking to downtown Gilbert & Oregon's. This is a fun event for students to invite their outside friends to join us for free. We ask other students and adults to contribute \$10 each.

## **Around the Corner:**

A Youth multi-church Christmas Party is happening on Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> at Pollack movie theatre. We invite you to come celebrate the birth of the Savior, watch a movie and get to know students from other local Methodist churches. The youth will be participating for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in the downtown Phoenix Inner City Holiday Toy Drive and Block Party with the Meira House. The event benefits children who are less fortunate than others to receive gifts during the holidays.

## **\*\*Summer 2018 Mission Trip Announcements:**

Junior High trip will be going to serve with YouthWorks in San Diego, Ca. July 1<sup>st</sup> -7<sup>th</sup>, further details will be released soon.  
Senior High trip will be serving with SSP in Tsale, Az July 8<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup>, further details will be released soon.

**If you have any questions about Youth or Family Ministries, please contact Ray Vallera at [youthministry@gilbertumc.org](mailto:youthministry@gilbertumc.org) or 602-291-1968.**



## FIRST KIDZ - Fall Curriculum for November

This month, we want to cook up a big Recipe for Thanks with our preschoolers! Thinking about the things we're thankful for is the key to any recipe of thanks—and a thankful heart. We chose "Recipe for Thanks" as our theme because we want our preschoolers to learn how to have a thankful heart.



### GOD VIEW: the connection between Gratitude and God's character, as shown through God's big story

For our elementary and preteen families: Have you ever paused to think about everything God has done for you? He created a planet that's perfectly suited for otters and ostriches and you. Then, He sent His Son, Jesus, to this planet to die and be raised to life so He could have a forever relationship with you. Through the month, we'll help kids refocus on all that God has done for them. Because when you know what God has done for you: YOU CAN BE THANKFUL—ALWAYS!

## Wednesday Wilds/Wednesday Book Club - 6:30 pm

### Lego Bible Stories:

Come join us as we build and explore more Bible stories with Legos. We will get creative while exploring the stories of Jesus! Open to K-3rd graders.



### Book Club

We will continue the series from C S Lewis the Chronicles of Narnia with The Voyage of the Dawn Treader! Join us as we explore this fun series and act out, create, explore the meanings behind and just have a fun creative time together! Open to 4th-6th graders.



For information about Children's Ministry contact Janelle Chiricuzio at [childrensministry@gilbertumc.org](mailto:childrensministry@gilbertumc.org).

## Operation Christmas Child



Give a child a Merry Christmas! Fill an Operation Christmas Child shoe box with small toys and gifts! Plastic boxes are available from the Missions team. Instructions are included with each box. Gifts must be returned back to the church no later than November 19th so that they can be shipped overseas by Christmas.



## **Look What Your Giving is Helping Us Do!**

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

Provided on-going support for our Congregational Care Health & Wellness Ministry. Through the Health & Wellness Ministry volunteers working with United Blood Services, a blood drive was held in our Activity Center on October 22, where 29 people came to donate blood.

Provided support for the hurricane cleaning bucket drive organized by Pastor Gwen and our Missions Ministry Team. 80 buckets have been picked up by UMCOR for delivery to areas of disaster.

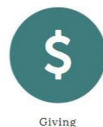
Provided support for our pastors, staff and committees to plan and carry out our Annual All Church Charge Conference, held in our church sanctuary on October 16. All church members were invited to this meeting to elect committee chairs, members and other leaders, approve pastors' salaries, and hear about our church's accomplishments, and goals for the coming year.

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"!

September 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](mailto:Financechair@gilbertumc.org)) or Deanna Helland, Treasurer/Church Accountant (480-892-9166, [accountant@gilbertumc.org](mailto: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](mailto:financialsecretary@gilbertumc.org)) or Deanna Helland (480-892-9166, [accountant@gilbertumc.org](mailto:accountant@gilbertumc.org)).





## November Anniversaries



3	Warren & Agnes Begley	72 Years
5	Kelly & Michelle McClain	29 Years
11	Cliff & Robyn Oswald	29 Years
14	Dan & Laurel Redman	8 Years
19	Andy & Teri Martin	20 Years
20	Jeff & Linda Martell	35 Years
22	Art & Sally Poeske	60 Years
23	David & Angela Mittner	12 Years
23	Cecil Stapleton & Mary Beth Nance	16 Years
27	Ted & Trish Jung	41 Years



## November Birthday Celebrations



1	Stanley Gill	12	Ted Jung	21	Stuart Wiemers
	Pam Johnson		Linda Roy-Sanders	22	Teverly Taylor
2	Tiffany Scharff		David Waechter	24	Roy Phelps
	Alexander Taj	13	Jacob Galvin		Katherine Willis
4	Karen Orndorff	14	Kay Warg	25	Barbara Burford
5	Terry Bettis	15	David Gripentrog		Kim Harding
	Nathan Howell		Scott Reeves	26	Donn Brown
	Amy Smith		Michelle Reynolds	27	Dean Boever
	Barbara Valbuena	16	Fred Contreras		Nancy Peters
7	Daniel Murphy		Kyle McClain		Craig Thompson
8	David Baker	17	Kendra Diegan		Jenny Vallera
9	Margaret Knoll		Mike Hansen	28	David Barclay
10	Dan Bose		Trish Odell		Colleen Gripentrog
11	Wendy Griffith	18	Blanche McDonough		Kelcey Skinner
	Peggy Johnston	19	Alana Uhl	29	Michelle Butler
	Ruth Lee	20	Jonathon Granado	30	Sharon Kotsonas
	Jeremy Norris	21	Cheryl Covington		

## Hands Working Together

By First UMC Gilbert Missions Team

This is the time of year when each of us are adding so many items on our to-do list to make holiday celebrations such as Thanksgiving and Christmas as picture perfect as possible. Please take a moment to read through the different ways you can lend a helping hand to make someone else's holiday celebrations a little brighter. Brighter with the warmth of love in helping others.

What is fantastic about looking through these options is that there are so many different ways to help giving financially, shopping/wrapping gifts or volunteering to deliver items. You can pick what interests you and what you have time to assist with. Any and all support is so appreciated and much needed. Now through the end of the year there will be a Mission table on the patio in-between services to sign up, collect donations or gifts or to answer any questions you may have.



## Operation Christmas Child

Mission Team Leaders: Randy Reed & Margie Zielstra

This is an annual drive for our church! On Sunday mornings in-between services you can pick up your shoebox. Go shopping and fill the box with items for a child to receive for Christmas. When shopping for your box, start with a quality "wow" item such as a stuffed animal, soccer ball with pump, or clothing outfit that will capture the child's attention the instant he or she opens the box. There are gift suggestions according to age and gender provided on the Operation Christmas Child website. The shoebox can be filled with hygiene items, toys and other fun items Add \$9 for shipping and return the box to church no later than November 19th. It is fun to take your children or grandchildren with you to shop for the items, providing great teaching moments!

## Turkey Drive

Mission Team Leader: Ed Stone

Beginning, October 29th you can help feed 100 families for Thanksgiving! For a donation of \$40, you will purchase a complete Thanksgiving meal for a family. There are a couple of ways to help with the annual program. Donate to provide the meals and/or meet at the church on Wednesday, November 22nd (day before Thanksgiving) and help deliver the turkeys to these families. A wonderful experience!!

## Senior Santa

Mission Team Leader: Val Kellogg

On Sunday, November 26th there will be a Christmas Tree in the courtyard with tags with requested Christmas gifts for senior citizens in our community. Pick a tag, something you would like to shop for, purchase the item and then wrap it all up with the tag attached. The wrapped gifts will need to be returned with in a couple week of picking up the tag. This ensures that everyone with a tag gets a gift.

**THANK YOU!!!** ...to all who supported the UMCOR Buckets! This amazing church put together 80 buckets that will be utilized by people working hard to rebuild their homes which have been impacted by hurricanes. So much effort went into this program to make this happen. Again thank each and everyone of you! Blessings for your work and prayers for this initiative.

# Preschool News

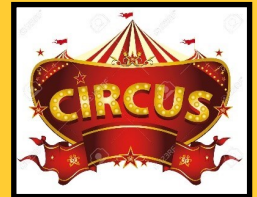
[www.gilbertpreschool.com](http://www.gilbertpreschool.com)



## 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 14<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.gilbertpreschool.com)



..... Spreading God's Love .....

## *You Have Touched Our Hearts!*

*Dear Friends,*

*Your gifts, cards, notes, and expressions of love and appreciation throughout the month of October have been an amazing blessing to us! Many difficult days were completely redeemed when something showed up that we did not expect and do not deserve but treasure with all our hearts! Thank you. It is a privilege and an honor to serve among you. We look forward to all God has for us to do and be together.*

*Your Pastors*

*Deborah, Gwen, and Tina*

### *Christmas Eve - December 24*

#### *Morning Services*

*9:30 am Traditional*

*11:00 am Contemporary*

*(no 8:00 am service)*

#### *Candlelight Celebrations*

*4:00 pm Family Service*

*6:00 & 8:00 pm Traditional Lessons and Carols with Organ and Choir*

*10:00 pm Traditional Lessons and Carols with Handbells and Holy Communion*

*4:30-7:30 PM Live Nativity with Petting Zoo*

*(Professionally Staffed Nursery for children through age 3, only at 6 pm)*



**First United Methodist Church of Gilbert**

331 S. Cooper Road Gilbert, AZ 85233

480-892-9166

[www.firstgilbert.church](http://www.firstgilbert.church) [info@gilbertumc.org](mailto:info@gilbertumc.org)

Office Hours: 8am-4pm Monday—Thursday

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<http://www.facebook.com/FUMCofGilbert>

FOR MOBILE GIVING

