

We observed his star at its rising,
and have come to pay him homage.

Matthew 2:2

The Evangel

First United Methodist Church of Gilbert

January 2016

Building a Fruitful Life Together

This month's January sermon series looks at building a fruitful life

January 3rd—Epiphany Sunday/Communion

Radical Hospitality, Romans 15:7

January 10th

Passionate Worship, Psalm 84:1-2

January 17th

Intentional Faith Development, Acts 2:42

January 24th

Risk Taking Mission, Luke 6:32-33

January 31st

Extravagant Generosity, Acts 2:45

New Year, New Opportunities

On page 6–8 is a summary of new chairpersons and members of committees and teams. First United Methodist Church of Gilbert carries out our ministries and programming through these committees and teams. The new year is a perfect time to evaluate where your gifts and interest might best be engaged to help us “lead people of all ages on the journey to become deeply devoted followers of Jesus.” Every team would benefit and be appreciative of those wanting to contribute. Contact committee chairperson or our Director of Welcome & Connection, Lori Wiemers at volunteer@gilbertumc.org for more information.

“Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can”

- John Wesley



www.firstgilbert.church

In This Issue

- Christian Ministry at Work
- 2016 Leadership Teams
- Adult Education Classes Starting Jan 13th
- Sunday Morning Hospitality
- Family Camp

Message from Pastor Deborah

Dear Friends,

As I write I am thankful for the gift of another year – another new start, another new beginning, another clean slate upon which to write the next chapter of my life's story. This gratitude is similar to what I experience as I reflect upon the many new starts Jesus gives to me as I wax and wane in my faith; as I draw near, then wander away before realizing all I am missing and come close again; as I make mistakes, realize my errors, confess and receive forgiveness. Again and again and again. How grateful I am that he never gives up on me!

Each New Year also provides a new start for the church: an opportunity to re-consider who we are and how we have been living out our faith together; a chance to move forward into all God has to offer us as we commit our hearts and lives ever more deeply to God's service

This will be a special year for First United Methodist Church of Gilbert. This is the first January of our second century together, a moment to give thanks for all that has gone before and to step into the bright future that is always possible, by God's grace. As we move into 2016 you will begin to hear about both sides of that pivot point. Your building committee has been at work for almost two years examining the most critical capital needs of our campus, a quarter century after the first building was erected on this corner. They have looked carefully at the ministries we offer for all age groups and all we hope to do over the next few years to identify areas in need of improvement or expansion. I know your curiosity has been piqued, and you may even have had some worries about what they were doing. Over the next two months all of their work will be carefully unfolded before you, as we seek to raise the funds to make it real and possible.

There will be a long process even after the funds are raised to further prioritize our needs and obtain the necessary approvals. The whole church will be involved in this process, and the conference, and the district. It is an orderly, defined set of steps that we will begin to unfold, once we know the resources we have available. The process is defined in our conference journal, and by electing a building committee at a charge conference, and authorizing their work to define needs and raise funds, we have already begun moving through that process. If you would like a copy, please contact Pastor Deborah.

The capital campaign that will begin this month and be completed by Easter is called **Building on the Past, Believing in the Future**. Our guiding scripture is Jeremiah 29:11: *For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare, and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.*

I especially like this scripture because the next sentences are also so helpful: *"Then when you call upon me, and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart."*

In this campaign and in the revitalization we hope will follow we will honor all that has been given to us by those who have gone before, even as we reach out to a new generation of families that have different needs and expectations, and try to make this as much a spiritual home for them as it is a spiritual home for all of us.

We are being guided in this capital campaign by Horizons Stewardship, under the leadership of Don Smith. I am grateful for their careful mentoring. I especially appreciate their instruction that first and foremost the church be invited into a season of deep prayer about the campaign. You will receive a prayer reminder later this month with a brochure describing the vision of our campaign in general terms. The invitation to the whole church is simply to pray this prayer with regard to this campaign: *Lord, what do you want to do through me?* A little later, you will begin receiving devotionals to use daily, either by email or in hard copy, as you continue this season of prayer.

As we do that, we will be doing just what Jeremiah prophesies: searching for God, with all our heart. The promise is that if we are willing to do that, we will find him – his will, his way, for each of us and for our church.

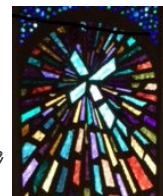
We start and end with prayer. Always. Please plan to make this prayer a priority in your life and in your family over the next few months, so that we might truly discern God's intentions for our church, and for all of us.

Blessings of the New Year

Pastor Deborah



*Building on the Past,
Believing in the Future*





Look What Your Giving Is Helping Us Do!

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

- Provide musical scores and allow our Music Director to plan and carry out our Christmas Cantata, "Portraits of the Season: A Christmas Carol Gallery", with our organist, Chancel Choir, and instrumentalists, providing a beautiful worship experience in our traditional services on December 13.
- Allow our Youth and Family Ministries Director and our Family Ministries Team to plan and carry out our Chili & Caroling event, with help from our Boy Scout Troop, on December 13. Over 300 people attended this fun evening and went out into the neighborhood to bless those around us with the gift of Christmas music.
- Allow our Youth and Family Ministries Director to plan and carry out, with our Youth Ministry Team and the youth of our church and their parents, our participation in the Inner City Block Party in downtown Phoenix hosted by Meira House.
- Allowed for our Preschool to present their adorable Preschool Christmas Program, "Christmas Lights" on December 11. This involved 49 preschoolers, and was attended by a sanctuary full of their family and friends, many who are not currently members of our church.

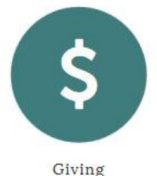
Without your gifts, we could not do this work which is all focused on our Mission "To Lead People of All Ages On the Journey to Become Deeply Devoted Followers of Jesus"! On December 15 the Administrative Board approved a 2016 operating budget. Copies are available to all who are interested by contacting our accountant at accountant@gilbertumc.org. They will be provided to all committee chairs by the beginning of the year.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: To ensure the deductibility of your church contributions, do not file your 2015 income tax return until you have received a written acknowledgment of your contributions from the church. Some of your contributions may not be tax deductible if you file your tax return before receiving a written acknowledgment of your contributions from the church. Year-end giving statements will be sent out as soon as possible after all 2015 giving has been recorded.

IRA ROLLOVER UPDATE: In 2015, Congress enacted a permanent extension of the IRA charitable rollover. As a result, individuals age 70 1/2 or older can make gifts directly from their IRA to charity in 2015, 2016 and beyond. If you are 70 1/2 you can rollover up to \$100,000 from your IRA to your United Methodist Church and/or ministry. You won't be taxed on the transfer and it counts against your required distribution. Best of all, it's easy. Contact your IRA Administrator to see how you can roll over into tax savings.

Garin Campbell is stepping down as Finance Committee Chair at the end of 2015. Please join the committee in thanking her for her service as Chair. Our new Finance Chair will be Susan Bowers. If you have any questions about the church's finances, please contact Susan Bowers, Finance Chair (317-730-0162, 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. Click on the GIVING link on our website to process your donation on-line.



Giving



Baptized into Christ's Ministry

Who within this world will accept humanity in its entirety? Which is to say, who will accept everything about you and me: our past sins, our future sins, our peculiarities, our limitations, our humanness? Eventually, even the people whom we love the most, will annoy and frustrate us with a vast spectrum of human limitations and personal differences. On a much larger national and international scale, humanity can't seem to find the flexibility or empathy to accept other people with differing government, religious,

and national and international interests. We can't seem to accept everyone as Christ has accepted us. On Baptism of the Lord Sunday, we are reminded of the limitless love which Christ has for humanity through his divine acts of mercy and compassion.

Baptism of the Lord Sunday occurs one week after Epiphany Sunday (mid-January) in the life of the church. On this Sunday, I am always reminded of how much Jesus Christ loves each and every one of us.

Baptism has always been a form of human cleansing. Washing rites often characterized the priestly preparation for a sacrificial offering (Exodus 40). Within the New Testament, we see John the Baptist's baptism, which was coupled with a call to repentance and the forgiveness of sins (Mark 1). This same theology was present during the Greco-Roman Empire when Jesus walked the earth. That is, you sought to be baptized as an act of repentance and forgiveness.

The setting within Luke's gospel is peculiar. We receive the words of John the Baptist mentioning the Messianic quality of Jesus; however, he is not present at Christ's baptism. Within Luke's baptism account, Christ is being baptized among the masses; however, he is not being baptized by this forerunner. The rationale behind John's absence is due to his imprisonment which was initiated by King Herod. Furthermore, within Luke's lection account, there is no mention of the River Jordan where baptisms often took place.

Perhaps a more profound peculiarity is the fact that Jesus is being baptized. If this is the sinless one, why would he need repentance? If this is the sinless one, why would he require forgiveness? One distinctive quality to this text is the gift of the Holy Spirit which anointed Jesus and prepared him for his public ministry (This same quality is also fervently apparent in other Gospel accounts). A second distinctive quality to this text is that Jesus is identifying with human sin, but in what way? Thus, a conclusive question becomes, *Why is Jesus Christ in need of baptism?*

I have struggled to find a definitive answer to this question. However, I truly believe that Christ is being baptized in order to take on the sins of the world. Jesus embraced and encountered the sins of the world with one submersion. We are a people made in God's image and Christ loves each and every one of us, just the way that we are. Jesus did not just tolerate our human sin, he desired to embody it through his own baptism. This embodiment of human sin underscores his continuous loving embrace of you and me.

When you and I are baptized in the Christian Church Universal, we are baptized into the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. So, one challenging question that I wrestle with involves my acceptance of all of God's creation. If I am born into the image of God, baptized into the ministry of Christ, and called to emulate this ministry, how am I treating or mistreating others who are not like me? Am I able to embrace the peculiarities of others as Christ so freely chose to do in a single submersion? On January 10th, 2015, let us all remember our baptism(s) and so live out our call attesting to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Let us also remember that Jesus' life, death, and resurrection involved embracing the sinner, which was all of humankind. —*David J. Harriss*



Disciple 1: Becoming Disciples through Bible Study

Beginning Wednesday, January 13th 6:30pm—8:00pm in room 133 Instructor Molly Hahn

A 24 week study of the entire bible. Each weekly lesson has 6 days of daily note taking on Bible readings and the class consists of small group discussion, a video and prayer concerns.

Wednesday Night Fellowship

Everyone is welcome to join us for dinner at 5:45pm, individual meal is \$3 and it is \$12 for a family. New for 2016! The second Wednesday of each month there will not be a fee! Instead the church will provide the main dish but the remaining part of the meal will be potluck. Please bring a dish to share. January's main dish will be ham.

Class Description	Room	Time	Facilitator	Start & End Date
Disciple Bible: 24 week study from Genesis to Revelations	133	6:30 pm	Molly Hahn	1/13/16—6/29/16
Confirmation Class: 7th Graders and older on the journey to confirmation.	140/141	6:30 pm	Ryan Collins, Gayle Disch & Aryn Peppin	8/19/15—5/11/16
12 Extraordinary Women: How God shaped women of the bible and what He wants to do with you.	142	6:30 pm	Anna Stearns & Sylvia Harris	1/13/16—3/23/16
The Jesus Lifestyle: Based on Jesus' radical teaching from the Sermon on the Mount.	200	6:30 pm	Robin Lee	1/13/16—2/24/16
Divorce Care: Separation and divorce support group.	201	6:30 pm	Adriana Hernandez	11/4/15—2/17/16
5 Love Languages: Understanding your love language. Class is great for married couple and those who are single. \$11/book.	202	6:30pm	Pastor David Harriss	1/13/16- 2/17/16
Jeremiah: Daring to hope in an unstable world.	203	6:30 pm	Kay Pealstrom	1/13/16—3/2/16
Hurting Mom, Healing Hearts: Working through the process of a healing heart of a mom.	204	6:30 pm	Sharon Kotsonas	1/13/16—3/23/16

Mission Trip Registration

Junior High will be heading to Cortez, CO from June 19-24 and Senior High will go to San Diego July 3—9. If you are interested, please act now because once the spots are filled they are filled!

eMail Ryan at youthministry@gilbertumc.org to register.



Ask Me Anything Sunday

If you are a newcomer among us, or someone who would like to deepen your involvement with the church by finding just the right class or opportunity for service, plan to meet with Lori Wiemers, Director of Welcome & Connection. Lori is the person who helps folks find their niche for service. Join her for a brief conversation on the patio right after each worship service on January 17th. She will ask a few questions to find out what you are seeking, and help you find just what you are looking for. Or, you can ask any questions you have about our church and she will find an answer!



Join us for Pizza with the Pastor

Sunday, January 10th 12pm (after 3rd service) in the Activity Center

Enjoy a simple meal and conversation with others from First UMC. We especially invite newcomers to attend, along with key leaders who would like to help our newcomers feel comfortable and involved.

Christian Ministry at Work

The next few pages provide an overview of the 2016 Leadership Teams. A heart felt thank you to all those who served in 2015, welcome to the newly elected and “bless you” to those who are remaining on teams.

There are times when the word “volunteering” has negative connotations. Each one of us has our own responsibilities and work load to manage. Taking time out can be a difficult thing to do. One way to climb over this “volunteer” hurdle is to not think about working on church endeavors as volunteering but think of it as Christian Ministry. God has gifted each one of us with skills, abilities and interests. Those gifts can be shared with the church through Christian Ministry.

Read the team overviews. Determine items that peak your interest. Look for names that you know, reach out to them and ask questions. Each team has programs and activities during the course of the year that they will be happy to share with you. Anyone on a team can help you be linked into something that draws you closer to your spiritual works.

Don't recognize a name? Contact Lori our Director of Welcome & Connection at volunteer@gilbertumc.org.

“Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.” ~Romans 12:11



2016 Leadership Team

As we begin a new year, the Ministry teams are welcoming new members, preparing new chairpersons and rolling their sleeves up to start work on 2016. Please keep everyone on these teams in your prayers. Reach out to them to encourage and offer assistance. It is this church's mission to “Lead people of all ages on the journey to become deeply devoted followers of Jesus.” These teams are charged with guiding all of us to meet that mission.

Administrative Board

The Administrative Board members represent officers from various church committees including Ministry Team Council (MTC), Lay Leaders, Lay Members, Church Accountant, Finance, Trustees, Staff Parish Relations and Building Committee. This team meets every other month and makes sure that all the components of the church's ministries are working within the guidelines of UMC and are working towards the church's mission.

Chairperson: Garin Campbell (newly elected)

Current Members: John Bowers, Glen Compton, Robin Lee plus a representative from all of the committees mentioned above.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is chartered to oversee the physical campus and all legal matters including the maintenance, insurance coverage and adequacy of church property, buildings and equipment. This team meets on a monthly basis.

Chairperson: To be elected in January 2016

Current members: Ernie Broughton, George Pettit, Kevin Boesch, Dan Vrana, Bruce Woolsey

Newly Elected: Diana Elliott, Lydia Ramirez, Al Reynolds & Erik Scharff

Finance

The Finance committee provides oversight of financial resources and providing a framework for budget development.

Chairperson: Susan Bowers (newly elected)

Current Members: Rick Signor, Janet Bose, Stuart Wiemers

Newly Elected: Joni Woolsey & Laurel Redman

Lay Delegate to Annual Conference

These church members have been elected to represent our church at annual conference. They serve on a number of administrative committees in an ex officio role.

2017: John Bowers

2018: Philip Tesarek (newly elected)

2018 Alternate: Kristy Bottesch (newly elected)

Leadership Development & Nominations

This committee is charged to identify, develop, deploy, evaluate and monitor Christian spiritual leadership for the congregation.

Chairperson: Rev. Deborah Lerner

Current Members: Ray Vallera, Elice Province & Mary Vrana

Newly Elected: Jo Mannion, Norma Mayne & Jo Asplin

Lay Leaders

This committee is charged to guide church council on matters regarding leadership (other than employed staff) and to identify, train and support leaders in the congregation.

Chairperson: Rev. Deborah Learner

Current Members: Kelly McClain, Michelle McClain, Kristy Bottesch

Ministry Team Council (MTC)

The committee meets every other month and is responsible for all program ministries of the church.

Chairperson: Anita Broughton (newly elected)

Current Members, Chairs of the following teams: Adult Education, Childrens Chair, Family Ministry, Missions, Sports Ministry, Health & Wellness, Preschool, Prayer, Historian, AV Tech Team, Worship & Youth.

Generosity

This committee is charged to guide the congregation to have an attitude of stewardship and generosity. They carry our an annual campaign to raise funding.

Chairperson: John Bowers (newly elected)

Current Members: Karen Coleman, Brian O'Brien & Katie Smith

Staff Parish Relations

This committee is charged to reflect biblically and theologically on the role and word of the pastor(s) and staff as they carry out their leadership responsibilities. The committee assist the pastor(s) and staff in assessing their gifts, maintaining health holistically and work-life balance, and setting priorities for leadership and service. They set personnel policies and oversee issues related to employment.

Chairperson: Sharon Kotsonas (newly elected)

Current Members: Robyn Oswald, Gayle Disch, Michelle McClain, Beth Boesch, and Joe Mayne

Newly Elected: Barbara Burford, Brian O'Brien & Chris Odell

Adult Education

This committee is charged to select curriculum and provide education opportunities that meet the spiritual needs of the adult congregation members. The scope includes Sunday school classes and Wednesday Evening classes, retreats, men and women groups.

Chairperson: Bob Stearns

Current Members: Mike Miller and Anna Stearns

Newly Elected: Sylvia Harris

Family Ministry

This committee is charged to identify, organize and provide ministry events that encourage family faith development for families of all kinds and for the church family as a whole. Past events organized by this committee are Family Fun Festival, Chili & Caroling, End of Summer Luau and Friday Nights Family Night.

Chairperson: Kristy Bottesch

Current Members: Sini Ouellette, Katie Smith, Katie Bouchie, Jenny Vallera

Newly Elected: Sylvia Harris

Children Ministry

This committee is charged to identify, organize and provide ministry to the children of this church. This team coordinates volunteers and activities for FIRSTKIDZ (Sunday School), Wednesday WILDS and Vacation Bible School.

Chairperson: Brittainy Warne-Murphy

Current Members: Jennifer St. Pierre, Ursula Barrie, Vicky Hanson

Newly Elected: Renee Ladd, Jeni Hemingson & Jennifer Karavakis

Invitation/Welcoming/Evangelism

This committee is charged with creating invitational opportunities to attract those with no church family and creating an atmosphere of welcome and inclusion for those who visit.

Chairperson: Richard Rico

Current Members: Janelle Chiricuzio, Adriana Hernandez, Dina Reid, Shirley Baer, Susan Bowers

Newly Elected: Phyllis Spittel, Laura Contreras & Kim Fiarley

Ex Officio Members: Christine Bayer (3rd Service Host), TBD Coffee Hour Coordinator & Cindie Rempel (Welcome Cart Coordinator)

Youth Ministry

This committee is charged to identify, organize and provide education, activities and programming for youth 7th grade—12th grade. Scope of responsibilities include Sunday school, Confirmation, Sunday Evening Fellowship and mission trips.

Chairperson: Ron Mason

Current Members: Kendall Fink, Lara Fink, Kim Dare, Tom Dare, JoBeth Minks & Ray Vallera

Worship

This committee shapes to worship life of the congregation in all its fullness.

Chairperson: Robin Lee (newly elected)

Current Members: David Baker (AV), Herb Miller (Greeters), Gary McGrath (Ushers), John & Susan Bowers (Communion), Marty Province (Music Director), Troy McDonald (Contemporary Music), Kelcey Skinner (Acolytes) and Charlotte Hazelrigg (Liturgists).

2016 Leadership Continued



Missions

This committee organizes and executes mission initiatives that provide social benefits to community members (local and abroad) and that engages the congregation in service beyond ourselves.

Chairperson: Mike Harris (newly elected) & Sandra Toney
Current Members: Ted Jung, Trish Jung
Newly Elected: Alana Uhl, Harlan Madsen & Phil Rees
Ex-Officio Members: Lisa Kimbrough & DyAnn O'Brien (Family Promise), Rick Frazier (Orchard Africa) & Bruce Bettis (ERT Rep)

Sports Ministry

This committee is responsible to develop activities in a Christian context that provide fellowship opportunities and entry points for newcomers. At present activities include volleyball and softball teams.

Chairperson: Matt Ramirez & Bret Henderson (newly elected)
Current Members: Katie Smith
Newly Elected: Jon Chuk and Marc Booker

Preschool

This committee is responsible to assist in the preschool's curriculum execution through activities, events and program management.

Chairperson: Barb Perry
Current Members: Mike Miller, Sini Ouellette, Aryn Peppin, Lisa Strazz, Therese Pineda & Diana Elliott

Health & Wellness

This committee is responsible to develop and coordinate ministries that address individuals personal wellness. Activities include blood drives and blood pressure checks.

Chairperson: Teri Martin & Therese Pineda
Current Members: June Morrison, Lisa Strazz, Beverly Ogden, Chris Thompson, Carlene DuAmarell & Laura McLeod

AV Tech Team

This committee is charged with the technical components needed in our ministries especially worship.

Chairperson: Dave Baker (newly elected)
Current Members: Teri Martin, Alan Ball, Kelly McClain, Jon Chuk, Jo Mannion & Kevin Boesch
Newly Elected: Chris Toney

Historian (New Committee)

Responsible to preserve the history of the church.
Newly Elected: Therese Pineda

Appointed Roles

These constituents have taken on a role in church leadership that is appointed not elected through the charge conference process.

Kitchen Coordinator: Katie Bouchie
IT: Philip Tesarek
Care Coordinator: Pam Campbell
Prayer Coordinator: Rita Wagner
Coffee Coordinator: Open Position

Have you ever been the new kid in school? It can be a very daunting feeling. Every Sunday we have a team of people who volunteer to ensure that newcomers and all members feel welcome and also feel happy to be here.

It starts with the greeters and ushers who smile, give out bulletins and answer any questions that you may have. Handshakes and chatter fill the church as we begin our morning worship.

After the service, we gather out on the patio and into the Activity Center. There is coffee and snacks readily available while everyone has the opportunity to meet new folks and share the happenings of their week.

Whether you are coming or going out of the church you are likely to pass the welcome cart filled with information and another smiling face.

All of these volunteers are greatly appreciated and contribute to making Sunday morning a joyful time.

If you would like to help in any of these endeavors please contact Lori Wiemers our Director of Welcome & Connection, at volunteer@gilbertumc.org. Volunteering doesn't have to be a long time commitment, pick one Sunday...we are sure the joy you get from creating the hospitality will be returned to you through new friends and the appreciation of the congregation.

THE FAMILY CIRCUS





Children Ministries for January 2016

First Look will be taking a weekly look at something ONLY JESUS can do.

252 Basics will be focusing on “Power Up Self-Control.” We learn to reflect the character of God and respond to His love for us, self-control is crucial.

Parent Scoop: Monthly 15 minute information sharing. Meets the first Sunday of every month in room 142 from 10:35—10:50 am. January’s meeting will be 1/3. February’s meeting will be 2/7.

God Time Cards: These are available every week from your child’s SGL (Small Group Leader) and are for your child to do alone or as a family. There are four different devotions on each God Time card.

Parent Cue Cards: Provides simple CUES throughout the week that remind you to pause and make the most of everyday moments.

Contact Marsh Lehman at childrensministries@gilbertumc.org with any questions about the program.



FIRSTKIDZ Family Camp

Yes, we are happy Campers! Join FIRSTKIDZ and their families for a camp out in the activity center. Sit around a “roaring campfire”, sing songs and fall asleep in sleeping bags and/or tents. We will start at 5:30pm with a dinner of hot dogs, salad and chips. We’ll have s’mores for dessert.

We’ll have some games, sing around the campfire, and snuggle in our sleeping bags and/or tents. Saturday morning we’ll have donuts, bagels, orange juice and coffee. Then back home!

You can register at: <https://firstgilbert.wufoo.com/forms/firstkidz-family-camp-in/>

What Goes Up, Must Come Down

Come help us put away the Christmas decorations and get ready for the new year!
Saturday, January 9th at 8:30am

Conference Prayer Request

The Desert Southwest Conference of UMC is requested to pray for our General Conference, which will meet in the summer of 2016. We are signed up to pray for 15 minutes, pray for the delegates and their decision making as we move toward this important meeting that happens once in every four years.

Saturday, January 9th from 6:50am—7:05am

2016 Lay Servant Ministries

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). There are ten Lay Servant Ministries Training Opportunities in 2016 in the Central East and Central West District.

January 8-9, 2016 at Scottsdale UMC The Basic Course & Living Our United Methodist Beliefs (Advanced Course)

February 19—20, 2016 at Gila Mountain UMC The Basic Course & Leading Prayer (Advance Course)

For class registration:

<http://desertsouthwestconference.org/lay-servant-ministries>



All You Can Eat Pancake Dinner

Mark your calendar for a stomach filling yet spirit lifting opportunity! All proceeds benefit the 2017 trip to Orchard Africa.

Shrove Tuesday, February 9th

5pm—7pm

Activity Center

There is no set fee, you get to determine the donation amount. The Orchard Africa team is looking forward to serving you this meal.

Thank you for your support!!



Inner City Holiday Toy Drive and Block Party 2015

How Many Observe Christ's Birthday

Benjamin Franklin—one of the Founding Fathers of our nation—once said this about Christmas: *“How many observe Christ's birthday! How few, his precepts!”* What were his precepts? Well, his precepts were both his teachings and his life. We know from Scripture that Jesus came to serve and not be served, giving his life for many (Matt. 20:28) and that he likewise instructs us, as his followers, to show and give love to others as He has shown and given us love (John 15:12). Unfortunately, our contemporary approaches to Christmas can lend itself to have a focus antithetical Jesus' precepts. This is why it is important, as a youth ministry, to provide students with opportunities to live out Jesus' precepts for the benefit of others but also the students' benefit—to experience the presence of Christ in them and working through them.

On Saturday, December 12th, twenty students and adult leaders volunteered and participated in the Inner City Holiday Toy Drive and Block Party. Moving towards the date of the event the youth coordinated a quick toy drive to benefit local Phoenix children in need. The response from the congregation was a true blessing to our efforts and also to the children who received the great gifts First Gilbert donated. At the event, we provided and led four different craft tables including face painting. All four craft opportunities (thanks in large part to the leadership of our Preschool's Educational Director, Lara Fink) proved to be huge hits with the children. There were many smiles, lots of conversation, and a ton of perspective for us as leaders and students.

Parents and children started lining up along the park fence at 3:45am to gain entry to the Block Party at 10:00am to receive a ticket and select a \$10(+/-) toy. Overall, there was a total of 2,200+ people who attended and benefitted from this event. What struck me was that this was not a distant, foreign country that we visited—it was Phoenix, AZ in the great United States of America. This kind of perspective and experience is what I pray captivates the hearts of our students. It is this kind of perspective and experience that I pray enlightens the minds of students to the needs of others, even those in our local communities. It is this experience of serving children and seeing the smiles on their faces that I pray enraptures the students' being and propels them towards a life of real self-sacrificing love.

It is my prayer that the Inner City Holiday proves to be a moment in their life that they reflect on as a pivotal moment where they experienced the Holy Spirit working in them and through them.

Blessings,
Ryan Collins
Director of Youth and Family Ministries

Winter Softball Registration

Registration for the Winter Adult Co-Ed Softball team is open and will remain open until Sunday, January 3rd. The Co-Ed Softball team plays their games at Free-stone Park on Sunday evenings, please contact Ryan Collins at youthministry@gilbertumc.org.



Living the Questions

This adult Sunday school class is a small group that explores modern questions about the Christian faith. For example, what were the original intentions of the writers of the scriptures? How and why might the original texts have changed? Which aspect of the original Christian life apply in the 21st Century?

Curriculum is written by theology researchers, pastors, lay leaders, teachers and other contemporary thinkers. We welcome thoughtful and diverse opinions. Our class meets every Sunday at 11am in room 142.

For more information, contact Odus or Diana Elliott at 480-786-0055 or dbelliott@msn.com.

Adult Sunday School



Tindley Temple: A Highlight of Methodist History

A church in Philadelphia is on the national historic register because of its architecture. But Tindley Temple was also made famous because of the dynamic pastor who drew huge crowds in the 20's and composed the lyrics of a very familiar song.

Methodist preacher Charles Albert Tindley is credited with writing the lyrics to "We Shall Overcome" in 1901. This song is historically tied to the American civil rights struggle.

On January 18th, the nation honors Martin Luther King and all those who contributed to this movement. The Rev. Robert L. Johnson, Tindley Temple UMC states "Blacks and whites and Jews and Catholics all stood across this country in the '60s singing 'We Shall Overcome,' not even understanding the universal language they were singing came from a man who built a church right here on Broad Street in Philadelphia. Wow! Now, you want to talk about being proud to be Methodist, that's a reason to be proud to be Methodist."

Music, songs and lyrics are very powerful. They prompt memories and emotions differently in each of us. Enjoy your MLK holiday! Additional information available at www.umc.org.

January Birthday Celebrations

3	Don Adams	13	Dawn Harvey
6	Jenny Christopher		Steve Losey
8	Laura Klinkner	14	Jennifer Karavakis
	Bea Kurtz	18	Elice Province
	Kris O'Reilly	19	Mike Griffith
9	Karl Kotsonas	21	Lori Wilkins
	Sandra Toney	25	Beth Boesch
10	Trish Jung	30	E-Jay Christopher
		31	Sam Lerner



January Anniversary Celebrations

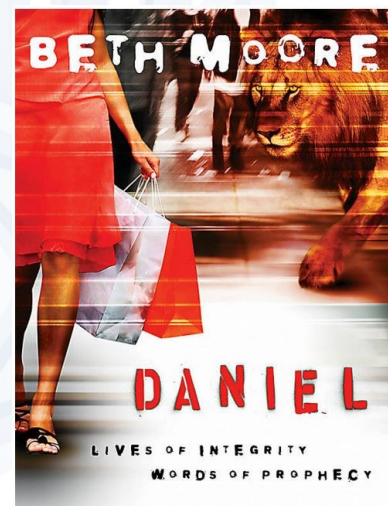


2	Eric & Shawna Palmer	23 Years
6	Garry & Gayle Disch	20 Years
24	John & Jory Lawson	11 Years
24	Herb & Carol Miller	13 Years

New Tuesday Morning Women's Bible Study Topic in January!

Tuesday Morning Women's Bible Study

A new study begins Tuesday, January 12th at 9am in room 142. The group is studying "Daniel—Lives of Integrity, Words of Prophecy" by Beth Moore. This is a faith building study of prophecy and learn how to live with integrity in today's self-absorbed society. The prophet Daniel faced unbelievable pressures to compromise his faith, to live in a hostile culture and to confront temptations and threats. Study his experiences to apply to your life today. Study book will be \$17, books will be available on January 12th.



Family Promise

This year in America, more than 2.5 million children and their parents experience homelessness. Family Promise is a local response to a national crisis, helping homeless families build new lives. The Family Promise agency keeps families together and provides them with a safe and supportive environment through a volunteer network. First United Methodist Church of Gilbert is proud to be starting our third year providing housing, showers, food and a personal support system.

Our next opportunity to provide volunteer services to this program are February 21st—February 27th. Below is a list of volunteer needs we have. One thing that is great about Family Promise is that there are volunteer opportunities that can be done as a family (from kids to grandparents) together or individually.

If you are interested in any of these opportunities, please contact DyAnn O'Brien at dyannob@gmail.com or call 480-510-7614.

Overnights

The homeless families spend the night in classrooms here at church. Volunteers are needed to spend the night, to be a resource (answer questions, direct where things are on the church campus) to the families staying here. Volunteers can be a couple or a family, and typically pick one night to stay from approximately 6pm to 6am.

Dinner Preparation

Each night the church provides dinner for the families. There is so much help needed in this space! You can donate food for breakfast, lunch or dinner. You could set up tables/chairs for dinner, dinner clean up or the actual preparation of the dinner meal. The dinner hour, particularly for those who don't have a home to prepare a family meal, is a great opportunity to create a loving and welcoming setting for them to enjoy their evening. Contact DyAnn to get a complete list of food needed.

Bedding

This wonderful act of picking up linen, washing them and returning to the church is fantastic! There is plenty of bedding, towels and linen that need this service. The church depends on this help to provide clean environment for the families.

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H	T	I	I	N	I	H	A	A	G
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T	A	R	G	F	C	L	O	R	A
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BETHLEHEM
EAST
INFANT
KING
STAR
HOMAGE
LEADER
DATE
CHILD
DELIGHT
GOLD
MYRRH



UMC Book Club

January 21st 11:30am at June Morrison's home. The book is "Accidental Saints: Finding God in All the Wrong People" by Nadia Bolz-Weber.

Contact June at 480-892-4777 or email Jnmorrison10@aol.com to notify her if you plan to attend. Bring a sack lunch or snack. Call Chris Thompson with any questions, 480-201-1152.

Contact Us

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www.firstgilbert.church
info@gilbertumc.org
<http://www.facebook.com/FUMCofgilbert>

Sunday Morning Worship Schedule

8:00 Traditional Service
9:00—9:30 Coffee Hour
9:30 Traditional Service
10:30—11:00 Coffee Hour
11:00 Contemporary Service

Adult Sunday School
8am, 9:30am & 11am
FirstKidz 9:30am & 11am
Professional Nursery
7:45am—12:30pm



UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF GILBERT