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Church Office News!

- Office Hours—Open Monday thru Thursday 8:30-4:30 and by appointment on Friday.

331 S Cooper Road
Gilbert, AZ 85233
480-892-9166

A Word from Pastor Deborah



He is risen! He is risen, indeed!

These stirring words and an Easter Bell peal open each of our services on Easter Sunday, as we gather in awe and wonder to remind ourselves that Jesus' grim death on the cross and his burial in a cold dark tomb were not the last word. God always has the last word, and our God is a God of life! In Jesus' words, as he answered the trick question about multiple marriages and who is married to whom in heaven, "you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God.....He is God not of the dead, but of the living." (Matthew 22:29b, 32b)

That is good news when we face moments that feel like death: moments when someone we love begins or completes the journey from this life to the next; moments when we lose a job, or a relationship, or a dream, or a sense of purpose, or our hope for something better. If God can raise Jesus from the dead, God can bring life, light, and hope to all of our places of darkness, transition, and hopelessness.

Our Easter declaration reminds us of these essential, undeniable truths of our faith. In the words of the old preacher, "It may be Friday, but Sunday's a-coming."

With the news of pastoral changes at First UMC of Gilbert, it may feel like Friday – like the end, in some ways. It is the end, in some ways: the end of this chapter in mission and ministry at First. But it is also the beginning of the next. There will be a new Senior Pastor, and a new Associate Pastor, and they will arrive with energy and hope and purpose. They will have the privilege of meeting the outstanding leaders who are already in place across every area of the church: leaders who are faithful, grounded, disciplined, hopeful, and ready to do what is needed to continue the good work God has begun in us, with us, and through us.

He is risen! He is risen, indeed!

You will teach them about your hopes and dreams; about the vision and mission you have discerned together; about the programs that are drawing more and more people into classes and into service as congregational care ministers and Stephen Ministers; about the new building and all it will offer to new generations of children, youth, and adults. You will work with them to become more invitational and more welcoming to newcomers. You will offer your love and support, which was given so generously to each of us when we arrived and was so helpful for each of us. And together you and they will seek the will of God for this church in this unfolding moment. Beyond the Friday, beyond our mutual grief and sense of loss, will be Sunday: the birth of new relationships, hopes, dreams and purpose.

We still have several months together, and I cherish every moment when I can tell many of you how much you mean to me, and how good it has been to work together, and how rewarding it has been to see so many people stepping up and out into brave new ministries for Jesus' sake. We will worship together, singing, in John Wesley's instructions in the front of the hymnal, "lustily and with a good courage." We will pray and give thanks and break bread and celebrate all God has done, all God is doing, all God has yet to do in us with us, for us, and through us.

He is risen. He is risen indeed. Let us live as resurrection people, in the light and love of God's goodness, grace, forgiveness, hope, and power, treasuring the time we yet have together, and all that is yet ahead.

Blessings and Peace,
Pastor Deborah



A Word from Pastor Gwen



“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” – John 3:16

“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.” – I John 3:16

One summer at a family reunion in the Black Hills of South Dakota the lodge we were staying in came dangerously close to being caught in a forest fire. The glow of the fire on the horizon and the fine ash falling from the sky awakened us to the reality of how close the fire was. As we evacuated I was forced to think about what I would do if the wind changed and the fire caught us unaware.

I was reminded of the fires that have done much damage all across the western United States over the years. An article in National Geographic had once recounted the story of a ranger who was checking in an area heavily damaged by a fire in Yellowstone National Park. On the ground beneath the charred form of a tree he noticed a sickening sight. Perched like a statue in the ash were the remains of a bird. He gently poked the remains with a stick. As he did three tiny chicks scurried from under their dead mother’s wings.

The loving mother, aware of impending disaster, had carried her babies to the base of the tree and had gathered them to safety beneath her wings, knowing by instinct that the toxic smoke would rise. She could have flown to safety, abandoning her babies to the flames, but she chose to remain there steadfast as the blaze and the heat scorched her small body. Because she had been willing to die, those under the cover of her wings would live.

Isn’t this a lot like what God has done for us in Jesus Christ? Much like the mother bird, Jesus gave his life so that we might live. So great was his love for us, he willingly chose to die when he could have saved himself and abandoned us to face the flames of eternal destruction. He held steadfast as they nailed him to a cross so that under his outstretched arms we could have eternal life.

I am so grateful for the cross. I am so grateful that Jesus sacrificed so that we might be saved. Aren’t you?

Pastor Gwen



*Get your feet wet with
“Going Deeper—Dive In!”*

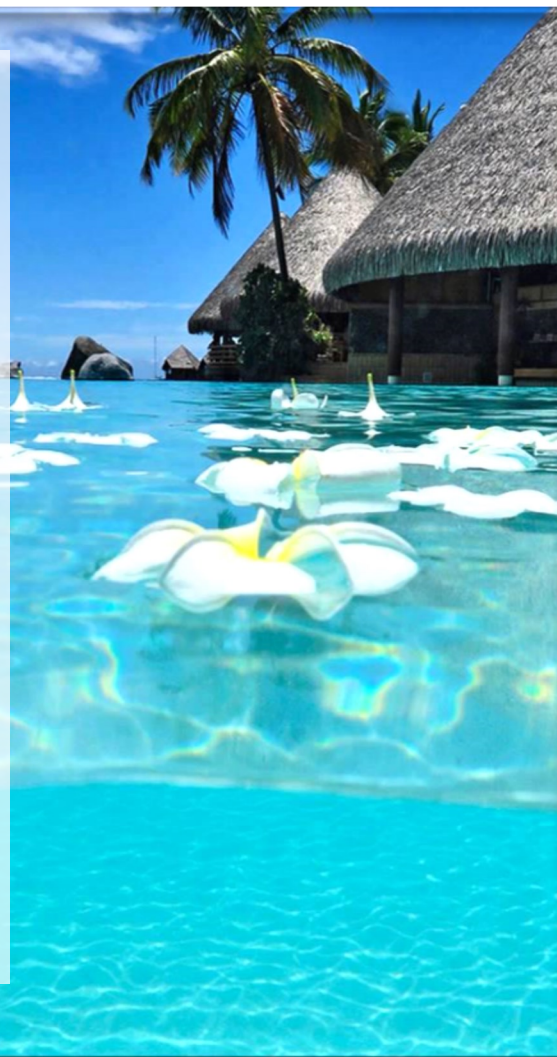
**A new sermon series this
month with Pastor Gwen**

April 8 “Treasure Hunting”

April 15 “Going Overboard”

As part of this series, Pastor Gwen invites you to share photos of you or your family underwater, in the water, or diving in!

pastorgwen@gilbertumc.org



**Gilbert Men’s Ministry
Pathfinders Breakfast Invitation
“What is a Pathfinder?”**

Saturday, April 14th from 7am to 8:30am

- Come enjoy a hearty breakfast
- Meet men for spiritual growth and support
- Personal testimonial & life sharing
- Audio & Video correlation
- Find opportunities for involvement in Gilbert Men’s Ministry



Volunteer Opportunities

Prayer Note Writers

Our Congregational Care prayer team is in need of persons who can assist with writing notes to persons sending in prayer requests each week. The ideal candidate would have the gifts of encouragement and faith, know the Bible, be able to keep the confidentiality of the requests, and be a person who cares deeply for others. The note writers meet Mondays at 9:30 AM in room 133. Training will be provided.

Birthday/Anniversary Cards

Congregational Care sends out Birthday and anniversary cards to all our members and constituents each year. If you would like to join the group that makes the cards, we need you! We also can use your extra new store-bought cards. To join in this effort, contact Molly Belcher at billandmollie@hotmail.com or pastorgwen@gilbertumc.org

Congregational Care Support Groups

For more information about groups and other support available, please contact Pastor Gwen at pastorgwen@gilbertumc.org



Thursdays 6:30 to 8:30 pm
Room 200



Saturdays 9:00 am to 10:30 am
Room 140
New class starts April 14

Living Hope



Wednesdays
6:30 - 8:30pm
Room 205

The Living Hope group is a 16 week curriculum-based support group for those who have experienced trauma or PTSD. Facilitated by Beth Flores.

Adult Education

For questions or class registration contact Kathy Rae Tracy at adminsupport@gilbertumc.org

Wednesday nights with meal at 5:45 • Classes at 6:30 pm

Journey 101

Serving God (March 7 – April 18)

Journey 202

Becoming a Contagious Christian • Mar 7 – April 18

Serving From the Heart • Mar 7 – April 25

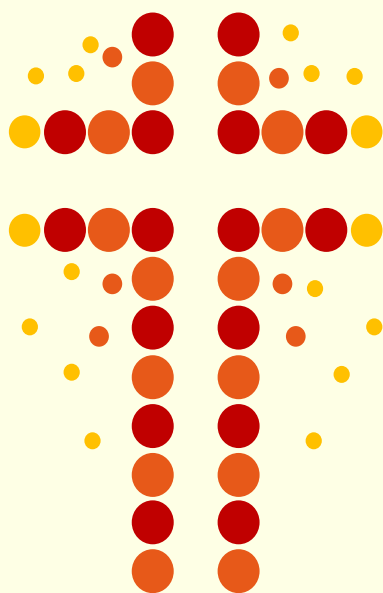
Join Now! Follow Me • Apr 25 – May 30

Following Jesus as a lifelong calling.

Pastor Gwen, facilitator. (6 weeks) – Room 201

Thursday night class at 6:00 pm

Alpha - Thursdays, March 1-May 17 - 6:00pm



FOLLOW ME

by David Platt

When Jesus says, "Follow Me," it's not an invitation to say a prayer, it's a summons to lose our lives. In this much-anticipated follow-up to *Radical*, Pastor David Platt challenges the traditions of cultural Christianity and reintroduces us to Jesus and His most simple request: **Follow Me.**

A six week study on what it means to follow Jesus, taught by Pastor Gwen

Wednesday nights (room 133) with meal at 5:45

Class 6:30—8:00 pm • April 25—May 30

Nursery care / Youth activities available

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Celebrate with each other!

Birthdays in April



Pat Bohart	1
Emma Strazz	2
Anah Whittington	
Taleen Carpenter	3
Leroy Johnson	
Liam Comstock	4
Christina Tesarek	
Andrew Wiemers	
Jayden Duran	5
Kathy Tracy	
Dana Corban	7
Kelly McClain	
Agnes Begley	8
Gloria Eggen	
Alexis Winkler	
Jeannine Langdon	10
Austin Curran	11
Judie Eastburn	
Dennis W Hazelrigg	
Carol Scharff	
Christine Bayer	12
Stephanie Helland	
Matthew Ramirez	

Ernestine Tesarek	12
Ka'aukai Tomasaitis	
Kelsey Bayer	13
Ava La Rose	15
Jeff Snyder	16
Ed Stone	18
Joseph Norris	19
Andrew Sovchik	
Valerie Kellogg	20
Mary Ann Kolmer	
Aidan La Point	
Patricia Lee	
Judy Kellogg	21
Jan Grindle	22
Jonathon Chuk	23
Matthew Olson	
Savanna Taj	24
Dawn Kopp	25
Julie Melka	
Lily Smith	27
Drew Harvey	28
Tanner Lang	29
Mike Cranford	30

Anniversaries in April



Anniversary Date	Sweet Couple	Years Married
1	Jan & Scott Grindle	34
4	Gilbert & Aryn Peppin	14
7	Jason & Laura Rowley	12
9	Bruce & Jonie Woolsey	52
13	Mike & Peggy Johnston	6
15	Robert & Margaret De Bolt	26
17	Glen & Jan Compton	14
17	Scott & Sini Ouellette	12
20	Dirk & Patti Smith	5
21	Allan & Nancy Peters	56
22	Ray & Jenny Vallera	23
25	Joe & Lora Norris	26
27	Michael & Bethany Castle	5
30	Mike & Keela Clark	29

My children, our love should not be just words and talk; it must be true love, which shows itself in action. (1 John 3:18)

It is such an amazing blessing is to be part of a church that has a heart for missions! There are projects that First UMC Gilbert supports faithfully: UMOM, Halle Center, Open Arms and the just completed Easter Bags for Sidewalk Sunday school. In total 132 bags were put together and delivered. Thank you for your generosity.

Another project that is done faithfully is the Mother's Day Purse Drive which has officially kicked off! Please bring in a purse (new or gently used) with a few personal items that make the joy of opening the bag and discovering what is inside just as exciting as walking around with a fabulous new purse! These purses are delivered to ladies that need these gift to light up their day. Purses are being collected until May 6th.

We received a lot of great input into organizations and needs that the Missions team could look into to broaden our impact to the community. New items include a UMCOR trip to Rio Texas Response & Recover Mission Trip which is scheduled for May 1-8th. Contact Al and/or Michelle Reynolds for more information on this trip. It is not too late to help with this hurricane recovery trip.

Upcoming new items for us is a Food Box program, organizing praying circles for upcoming planned mission trip and to schedule local mission trips for families.

Thank to everyone for the feedback, financial and spiritual support. Your taking action to support so many efforts is very appreciated. If you need any additional interest or would like to help any of our efforts feel free to contact Adriana at Adriana.143.10@gmail.com

Refugee Baby Shower April 28th



Refuge Connection Phoenix in conjunction with the Desert Southwest Conference Refugee Committee is planning a baby shower for multiple Syrian Refugees who are currently expecting! This is a community based baby shower to be held at First UMC Phoenix (5510 N. Central Ave Phoenix, AZ

85012) on Saturday April 28th from 1pm-4pm. We are in need of baby shower attendees, baby gifts and loving hearts to share in this fun afternoon! Contact Janelle at ChildrensMinistry@gilbertumc.org for more information.



Annual
**CHURCH
PICNIC**

**Sunday, April 8th
4 - 7pm**

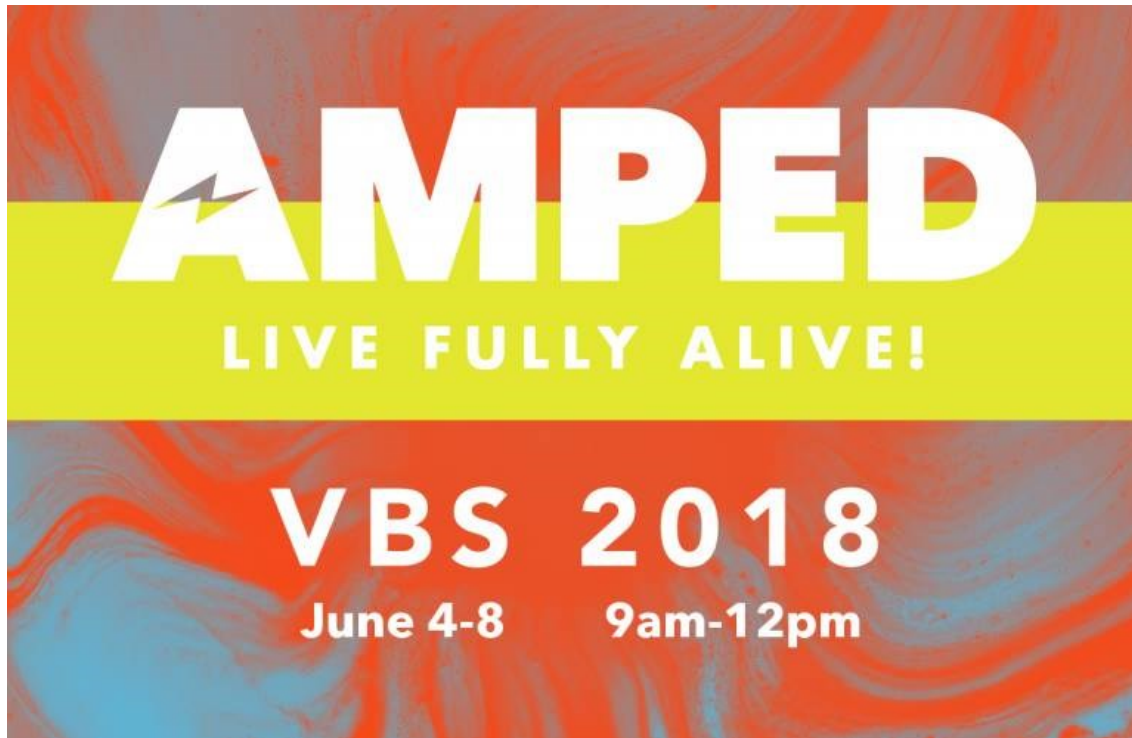
Join us for our annual church picnic here at FUMC of Gilbert!
All activities will be on the lawn behind the activity center.

*Music · Games · Bounce House
Hamburgers · Hot Dogs*

Please bring something to share:
(Last name starts with A-H: dessert; I-S: picnic side dish; T-Z: salad)

Everyone Welcome!

Contact Eric Butler for more information or to volunteer:
480-415-8175 • home@mebutler.com



LIVE FULLY ALIVE!

2018 is going to be ELECTRIFYINGLY fun!
We don't know if that's a real word, but we DO know that
we are going to have an EXTREMELY awesome VBS teaching
kids about why God wants each of us to be
OVERLOADED with CONFIDENCE.

John 10:10

*"I have come so that they may have life. I want them to have
it in the fullest possible way."*

Our VBS runs from 9am -12 noon Monday through Friday
Open to preschoolers aged 3 through 6th grade.

Register today online:


<http://gilbertumc.org/vbs-registration/>



Lora Norris
Adrienne Mesa
480-892-9166

preschool@gilbertumc.org

 FUMC of Gilbert Preschool

 Gilbertpreschool

 @gilpreschool

Registration continues for 2018-19 school year

We are still enrolling students for the 2018-2019 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! Please share this information with a friend.

REGISTER NOW!

Registration information and registration documents are online.

Spread the word! Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and on our website: gilbertpreschool.com!

Preschoolers with Heart

What's been happening?

Our preschool students and families helped the Senior High Youth by collecting items for their "blessing bags". These bags will be provided to church members to hand out when they see those in need of an "Act of Random Kindness". We collected travel sized items of toothpaste, toothbrushes, lip balm, soap, deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, combs and sunscreen. Thank you for the helping hands preschool families!

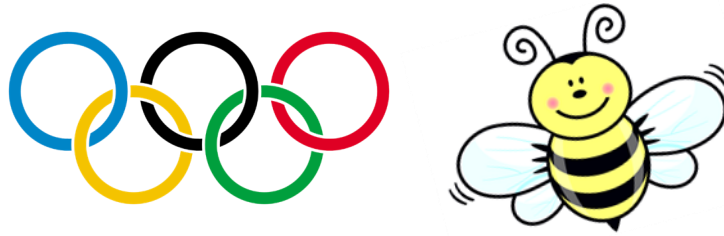


Dr. Seuss Week.

We celebrated reading with a week of rhyming and silly dress up days inspired by Dr. Seuss! We played Green Eggs and Ham tic-tac-toe and made red and white striped Dr. Seuss hats. Students were

inspired to read, write, and to "think left and think right and think low and think high. Oh, the thinks you can think up if only you try!"





Preschool Olympics

On April 9th and 10th, our preschoolers will work hard to learn new activities and show good sportsmanship at our Preschool Olympics. The hurdles will be an amazing challenge, the plasma cars will be racing around the Activity Center and the Team Relay Race will be inspiring! We are all on GOD's TEAM!

Gardening with Preschoolers

Have you checked out the Children's Garden in the courtyard? We are now growing Sunflowers! This month we are also raising caterpillars, observing and playing with ladybugs and touching earth worms! What fun!



Preschool—April Program

Hello, First Look Friends!

We have some BIG NEWS for you! Are you ready for it?

JESUS. IS. ALIVE!



Okay, okay. You already know that, but for many of the preschoolers who will be celebrating Easter with us, this will not only be BIG NEWS, it will be NEW news as well!

We have the awesome privilege of telling preschoolers that Jesus is God's Son, He is alive, and He wants to be their friend forever. It truly is BIG NEWS!

We need to get ready to tell the BIG NEWS that Jesus is alive and He wants to be our friend forever! Imagine preschoolers running around telling the BIG NEWS that Jesus is alive—now THAT would be awesome.

Elementary and Preteen—April Program

God View: The connection between honesty and God's character, as shown through God's big story.

God wants what is best for us. He has called us His children, and given us great things. Because we know that God is good, WE CAN BE HONEST. Lying and cheating are a response to fear. They are what people do if they think no one else will take care of them. But when you trust in God, when you know His love, you have a different response. You can be truthful.



the kingdom experiment

Older Youth—Wednesday Night Program

The youth will be working on a new book The Kingdom Experiment youth edition which looks at the Beatitudes. They also will be working on a dramatic piece that they will be creating, writing, and then acting out! Please look for this to make its way to our congregation! Wednesday nights 6:30-8:00 pm

Save the Date—Special Confirmation Service Saturday May 19 at 4:00 pm With Bishop Bob Hoshibata Preaching

Plan to join our 15 confirmands, friends and family for a special service of confirmation and communion. Those wishing to join the church will be introduced and received into membership on May 20, Pentecost Sunday.

Keep these young persons and leaders in your prayers as they make this journey toward a faith commitment together.

Thank You for supporting Youth Camp and Stock

A Huge Thank You to everyone that has donated to support our youth during the campership drive & stock sales. We raised \$1121 for camps and \$1140 on our first week for missions. These funds help youth attend camps and mission trips to build upon God's love & hope for them, and their future!

Confirmation Service Project • Saturday April 7 • 8a-1p

20 spots are reserved & open for "Hearts and Hands" @ St. Vincent de Paul. Volunteers engage in craft projects that are centered around the themes of offering blessings, love, hope, and motivation to our guests.

Youth Service Project

We have room for 9 more youth volunteers. Ron Mason & Cindie Rempel will chaperone 10 youth at St. Vincent de Paul's Mesa Urban Farm located at 67 W. Broadway Road, 85210. Volunteer duties change on a daily basis and may include but are not limited to: watering, weeding, harvesting, planting, waste/produce sorting, composting, trash pick-up, and tree trimming. Please dress appropriate for the Arizona sun and heat! RSVP ASAP please.

Spring Picnic • Sunday April 8 • 4-7pm Lawn Behind Activity Center

We'll begin setup @ 2:30 pm as picnic starts at 4. Everyone welcome! Live Music, bounce house for little kids, games, and much fun. Church providing grilled hamburgers & hotdogs. Please bring side dishes & desserts based upon the first letter of your last name.

Dessert for last names **A-H** • Side dish for last names **I-S** • Salad for **T-Z**

Look What Your Giving is Helping Us Do!

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

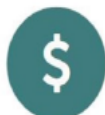
- Provided staff and volunteers for our Missions Team Easter Basket Drive for children who might not otherwise have anything on Easter. 132 Easter Bags were prepared using your candy and treat donations, and blessed in our worship services on March 11.
- Provided space, staff, volunteers and supplies including lunch for our monthly Explorer's Luncheon on March 11. So far this year 7 new members have joined our church after attending these informative fellowship opportunities.
- Provided space, staff and volunteers for our first-ever Thursday night Alpha class that started on March 8, after a Celebration Dinner on March 1. 18 people are attending the class, led by volunteer Mike Miller with 6 additional volunteer discussion facilitators.

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"!

March 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).

Please remember one of the easiest financial gifts you can make to our church is to donate a portion of your 2017 tax refund. Your gift will be used to continue and expand our church's ministry efforts as set forth in our 2018 budget. If you would like a copy of the approved budget, please contact the church office.

Have you used any of our electronic giving options? Electronic giving is the most confidential and accurate way to give to our church, and it's more efficient for our staff, as well. In addition to our church web-site, which you can access at www.firstgilbert.church or with your smart phone using the QR code below, you can also use our new Give by Text option, or the Joyfully 2 UMC app on your smart phone. All the details are on the web-site, and in the bulletin each week. 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).



Giving

