

### ***“What You Have First Given Us”***

*Merciful Father, we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us – our selves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

(Lutheran Book of Worship Offering Prayer)

Grow in giving for our growing ministry by joining the “One Hundred \$100’s” program. During 2015, commit an additional \$100 to your offering. Your participation can increase our operational funds by \$10,000!

### **Internship Fund**

The internship program continues to be a part of our ongoing stewardship effort. We have 39 pledges, for a total of nearly \$25,000, and have received over \$18,000 in contributions.

You are encouraged to continue to make your donations to support a future internship. Watch for more news on how you can help with this program.

### **Casa Grande Land Fund**

Our property “growth fund” has a balance of \$5,652, for the purchase of a permanent Casa Grande site. Discussion of future possibilities is ongoing.

### ***“Get Linked”***

Remember to check the Central Lutheran Church website, [www.centrallutheranaz.org](http://www.centrallutheranaz.org) for the schedule of events and news.

For the monthly **newsletter** and **sermons** go to the “Get Linked” page.

Our **Photo Album** has been updated and is available online.

From an e-mailed newsletter click on this link:

<http://www.centrallutheranaz.org/images/CLC%20Photo%20Album.pdf>.

Once the photo album is displayed in the browser, you can save it to your computer and then view it in Adobe Acrobat.

**Note:** to download Adobe Acrobat for free click here: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>

You can contact Pastor Thom through the website or at [pastor@centrallutheranaz.org](mailto:pastor@centrallutheranaz.org)

**Upcoming Council Meeting:** Tue, February 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. in Arizona City – submit all agenda items to Sandy Christopher.

### **Financial News**

Account balances through January:   Offering Income: \$18,091  
Balance General Fund: \$4,900           Average Monthly Expenses: \$17,000  
Capital Fund: \$65,291 – includes the Internship Fund: \$18,359  
Casa Grande Land Fund: \$5,652  
Balance of Mortgage with Thrivent: \$323,908 (12/31/14)

# **Central News**

February 2015

## ***Opening Our Hearts to God***

Money is a major topic of instruction in the Bible. Jesus frequently talked about money because he knew that its most damaging effect is to keep people away from God. The problem with money is that we want it so much. The reason why money may keep us away from God is a misguided fear that we’re going to lose it.

Jesus addressed our tendency to minimize life with God for the pleasures of money. Jesus said of those who hesitate to follow him, “*what does it profit them if they gain the whole world, but lose or forfeit themselves.*” (Luke 9:25)

Why do we do this when it comes to money? Why do we work so hard to get it and then work even harder to keep it?

Perhaps, it has something to do with ownership. If there is one quality we value above others it is self-reliance. We like to have ownership, so we feel we are controlling the details of our life. We like the feeling that money then gives us.

The way to release money’s grip on our lives is to give up the idea of ownership. God is the real owner of everything we have. No, God doesn’t need all our stuff (we don’t even *need* all our stuff). What God wants is our heart. God wants to be let into the details of life. God wants to be a part of how we manage our wealth.

When we consider our own offerings we are to seek the guidance of God and follow God’s direction to live wisely and share with our neighbor. Consider this when

Jesus said, “*for where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.*” (Matthew 18:20)

But don’t think two or three, but a hundred or more joining together in building our financial foundation and addressing the future ambitions of our ministry.

An increase in our ministry means an increase in our giving. Consider participating in “One Hundred \$100’s.” Our hope is that 100 or more others will give \$100 more this year, which go a long way to meet the needs and challenges that are ahead of us. Prayerfully open your heart to God in making all of your life choices.

**Central Lutheran Church           Thom Stephens, Pastor**  
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**[www.centrallutheranaz.org](http://www.centrallutheranaz.org)**

## **Worship Schedule**

### **Arizona City**

**Sunday -- 8:30 a.m.**

#### **Sunday School**

For information on Sunday School for children contact Linda Gal (705-1450).

### **Casa Grande**

**Saturday Evening -- 5 p.m.**

**Sunday -- 10 a.m.**

#### **Youth Night in Casa Grande**

Call Kara Cooper (426-9228 eve) to learn about youth weeknight program.

**Fellowship** is held at both sites each Sunday.

#### **Our Worship**

Our focus is on the good news shared by God through Jesus Christ, and is celebrated through the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion. Holy Communion is celebrated every Sunday at all services.

#### **Worship Assistants**

You are needed to help as greeter, usher, reader, communion server, offering counter, and nursery care. Sign-up and you will be contacted regarding the date to help.

**Altar Flowers** -- Sign-up to provide flowers on the altar for a special remembrance or event.

**Name Tags** -- We would like to have name tags for all of our worshipers. Sign up for yours.

## **Ash Wednesday Worship**

**February 18<sup>th</sup>**

**Arizona City -- 5 p.m.**

**Casa Grande -- 7 p.m.**

### **Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion**

Offering is shared with the ministries Lutheran Social Ministries of the Southwest.

Lenten series begins during Saturday evening worship Feb 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **Men's Saturday Coffee**

**Saturday, February 7<sup>th</sup>**

**8 a.m. Arizona City campus**

Come join in the opportunity for fellowship and discussion of *Lutheranism 101*.

### **Remember in Prayer**

Ada Biese, Harry Brink, Maxine Cadman, Marv and Ruby Craun, Bryon Foss, Pam Gardner, Mark Gerrish, Brandon Harless, Bob and Patricia Hedblum, Bev Hoffman, Ken and Betty Hunter, Rolland Karlin, Elaine Keane, Gertie Kenyon, Gene Kruger, Bill Liebhart, Gene and Paula Luft, Don and Bonnie Murphy, Walt Neulieb, Neil Northey, Roger Raduenz, Sharon Syvertson, Gary Towle, Larry West, Elaine Woodall, Ski Wrybkowski, Helen Zaudtke.

***Our Mission:*** "We are a Spirit-filled community of loving and caring, light-hearted people who joyfully invite all to share, through the Gospel, the love of Christ."

## **Youth Night Classes**

Weekday Bible studies and events for elementary, middle school and high school students are held on

**Wednesdays at 6 p.m.** at the Casa Grande campus.

Classes for the different age groups are led by Kara Cooper, Anne-Marie York, and Pastor Thom.

### **Ladies Quilting Ministry**

All women of the congregation are invited to join in quilting fellowship on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of each month from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Arizona City. Bring your lunch. Quilts are shared each year with the women and children at the Against Abuse Shelter in Casa Grande.

### ***"Gracious Dining"***

Join in the discussion of

### ***"That the World May Know"***

God's people were to serve him faithfully as the world watched.

Our mission is the same, to live obediently within the world so *"that the world may know"* God.

Watch for new opportunities.

### **9-Hole Golf Scramble**

**Sat, February 21<sup>st</sup> at 1 p.m.**

#### **Arizona City Golf Club**

Golfers of all abilities are invited to play, sign-up at either campus. Fellowship is held after play.

## **Community Adult Education**

When is the last time you have been excited, I mean "really cranked" about something in your life?

Well that's the way I feel about our church's effort in the ESL program. As a community, we all want to be sure that all of our friends and neighbors who need to speak English for themselves and for their families, have an opportunity to do so.

For four weeks now our church has been providing volunteers to assist in developing language skills for those who live in and around our two communities.

Four weeks ago, in Eloy middle school, we started with 13 individuals, next week we had 20, next week we had 26. It's obvious that the need is there and, we must be doing something right.

The three current volunteers, take turns in providing spelling, writing, reading, and grammar for those who attend. One specializes in "blackboard" another in "correcting homework," and, I have had the good fortune of engaging the students in conversation and the demonstration of proficiency.

Contact Alyson (602-721-1673 or [alysonstephens@q.com](mailto:alysonstephens@q.com)).for more information and scheduling a visit to the classroom.

Conway "Red" Keenan