

Encanto Community Church

A United Church of Christ Congregation
2710 N. 7th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85007-1124
602.266.4602

The Pilgrim

December Events

December 2	Choir Cantata Rehearsal 2pm
December 3	Choir Christmas Cantata! Pet Food Bagging Spanish/English 11:30am Play Rehearsal 11:30am
December 5	Hand Bells 5pm Choir 7pm
December 6	Trustees and Council 6pm
December 10	Deacon's Meeting Play Rehearsal 11:30am Spanish/English 11:30am
December 12	Choir 7pm
December 13	Blue Christmas 7pm
December 16	Play Dress Rehearsal 9am
December 17	Christmas Play and Luncheon
December 19	Choir 7pm
December 21	Nourish Phoenix 8:15am
December 24	Candlelight Christmas Eve 7:30pm <u>NO MORNING SERVICE</u>
December 25	Merry Christmas!!
December 26	Newsletter Deadline
December 31	New Years Eve Spanish/English 11:30am

Merry
Christmas

**WE ARE AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING
CONGREGATION.
EVERYONE IS WELCOME
HERE!**

December 2023



Please Remember in Your Prayers:

Diane Boudle, Bill Edens, Tammy Hughes, Jane Gempeler, Debbye Jones and Rev. Gloria Smith, Helen Kmiecik, Carol Krietenstein, Rich Maxwell, Carl Madsen, Sally Mitchell, Lillian Pain, George Penny, Jami Pourkeveh, Cindy & Mike Robinson. Nancy Studebaker, Shanti Sunderajan, Gavin V., Matthew Walker, Encanto Community Church, Our Community, and Our World. May God's grace and healing touch be with you all.

Late Last Supper

Encanto Church's Late Last Supper Club will be taking a break during December. Don't worry though, we'll resume our culinary adventures in January.

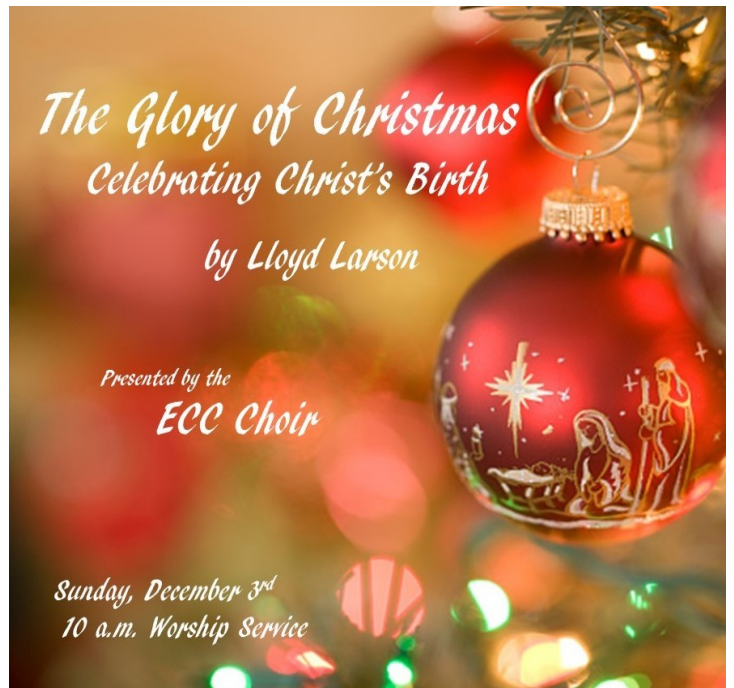
Come and enjoy the ECC Choir's Christmas Cantata on Sunday, December 3rd at 10am. It's sure to be a beautiful service.

The Glory of Christmas
Celebrating Christ's Birth

by Lloyd Larson

*Presented by the
ECC Choir*

*Sunday, December 3rd
10 a.m. Worship Service*



NEWS AND INFORMATION

Treasurer's Report. (General Fund for October 2023)

Beginning Balance: \$1,020.40
Received: \$16,899.50
Disbursed: \$12,410.22
Ending Balance: \$5,509.68
For a gain of: \$4,489.28

Total Offering Receipts for October 2023

10/1	10/8	10/15	10/22	10/29
\$2,387	\$1,473	\$2,197	\$1,497	\$1,805

There was no withdrawal from the endowment fund in October.

Copies of the monthly Treasurer's Reports, including a list of all disbursements, are on file in the office.



Rehearsals for the Church Youth Christmas play will continue to be held on Sundays after church from 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. with a mandatory dress rehearsal occurring at 9 a.m. on Saturday, December 16, 2023. The show will be presented during the annual Church Christmas Luncheon on Sunday, December 17, 2023.



Deacon on Duty

The Deacons are available to assist the pastor.
The Deacon on Duty for December is:

Marilyn Hall
602-266-4602

Birthdays To Remember **December**

Santiago Quinteros	7th
Lauri Hasler	10th
Chase Bauer	14th
KJ Kinder	18th
Iris Morales	19th

And a very happy anniversary to Jill Mahoney and Cindy Walley! They celebrate their anniversary on December 27th!



Our conversational English and Spanish classes continue to be offered on Sundays after church. If you are a non-English speaker who wants to learn basic conversational English, or if you are a non-Spanish speaker who wants to learn a bit of conversational Spanish, look for the study group that will be meeting during or after Fellowship Hour on Sundays after church.

Fellowship Hour

Thank you to Kathy S., Jill & Cindy, and Marilyn for providing tasty treats last month! The Hospitality Committee is looking forward to seeing everyone during Fellowship! Happy Holidays!

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the ECC Annual Meeting! The 2024 meeting takes place on Sunday, January 21st immediately following service. This meeting will be the time for any questions you may have regarding our church's functions and goals for the upcoming year.



Your ECC Security Task Force

One of the wonderful things about our church is the sense of warmth, comfort, and security we feel when we're there. This is largely due to the circle of caring, compassionate, and trusted friends we have developed. But to keep an extra eye on some additional areas of security, the ECC Council has put in place a Security Task Force. Guidance for this group's work has come largely from the Department of Homeland Security, FEMA, and CISA, all of whom produce a wealth of material and trainings for Houses of Worship to use across the country. At ECC, we have taken some specific actions over 2022/23 that are worthy of sharing:

- Meeting with FBI agent and defensive tactical trainer, Dan Johnson, to assess overall campus preparedness
- Completion of Security Self-Assessment and prioritization
- Annual Evacuation Reviews provided to congregation
- CPR Training provided, 10 congregants certified in '23
- Evacuation Routes posted and maintained
- Key Registry, in process

Currently, our world seems to be less secure than ever. The ECC Security Task Force wants to remind everyone that the Department of Homeland Security and FBI tell us, **'IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING.'** More information on recognizing and reporting suspicious activity is found here: <https://www.dhs.gov/see-something-say-something>.

All week, every week, please remember that we collect a variety of items for recycling including plastic water bottles, aluminum cans, newspaper, catalogues, and scrap metal. Proceeds go to support various church activities. Please see Cindy or Michelle for details about where to leave the recyclables when you bring them to church. Thank you!



Help Needed for Anniversary Recipe Calendar Project

We are starting plans for a fun project to celebrate our 80th anniversary! We have a long tradition of sharing fantastic recipes from all our talented cooks and bakers in the congregation, and with our anniversary is an opportunity to create an updated complement to our beloved church recipe book of the past.

But we need help!

We need:

Someone comfortable with any desktop publishing software to build this project
Someone to help coordinate collection and sort through a plethora of recipes

If you're reading this and thinking, "Well that's something I could do" please email Lisa Herrmann at lisa.herrmann@gmail.com (be careful spelling – there are 8 letters in my last name, where 6 would do!)

On Saturday, January 20, 2024, the Saturday Morning Social Gang is coordinating a day trip and scenic nature cruise on The Dolly Steamboat on Canyon Lake. This will be a six-mile narrated cruise on the 103' long Dolly Steamboat that takes approximately 90 minutes with a launch time of 12 noon. Carpooling will be available from the church, if you don't want to drive, and the cost will be \$30 per person (payable in advance). If you are interested in joining us, please let Kathy V. know, so that she can keep you in the loop. Everyone is welcome!



Staff Christmas Gifts

In an effort to better express our appreciation for our VERY hard-working staff, Church Council has decided to handle the employee Christmas gifts as they did last year. Instead of giving everyone a Christmas "bonus" from the General Fund, we will harken back to olden days when we simply took up a congregational collection for our marvelous employees. Accordingly, as the Christmas season approaches, you may give whatever you feel is appropriate to show your gratitude to our beloved staff members: Rev. Gloria Smith, Choir Director Jill Mahoney, Organist Genevieve Benham, Office Manager Michelle Lusania, and Caretaker Tony Lusania. **Gifts may be made in cash and should be given to John Hasenstab or Kathy Van Etten not later than Sunday, December 17, 2023, with a note designating the intended recipient(s).** Please feel free to contact Kathy V. if you have any questions. Thank you!!!



Church Council will provide the main course for dinner. Please bring a salad or dessert to share as you are able.



Sunday, December 24th
there will be no 10:00 a.m. Worship Service.
Join us for the Christmas Eve Candle-Light Service
at 7:30 p.m.

Pastoral Ponderings

Last month I wrote about gratitude and its role in our lives on the surface and our conscious awareness. I hope that you took the opportunity to discover how consciously grateful you are or are not by participating in a daily exercise of gratefulness for specific experiences and actions. This month I will focus on the scientific benefits of gratefulness or gratitude. Obviously, this will be a generalized summary of benefits due to the vast library of research from multiple disciplines.

The information below is quoted directly or adapted from Reseach.com in order to simplify the presentation of information.

Physical Health Benefits

1. Gratitude helps improve sleep according to researchers from the University of Manchester in England. The researchers discovered that gratitude drives negatives thoughts away. (Wood et al., 2009, p. 43-48).
 2. Gratitude helps prevent overeating. Susan Peirce Thompson, Ph.D., cites that practicing gratitude reinforces an individual's willpower to resist excessive eating.
 3. Gratitude helps strengthen the immune system thus decreasing the risk of contracting diseases (Sood, 2009; Emmons, 2010).
 4. Gratitude improves pain tolerance. According to Bruce F. Singer, the practice of gratitude may not completely eliminate chronic pain, but it can be an effective pain management tool. (The Sports & Spinal Group, 2020)
 5. Gratitude helps keep glucose levels under control. According to a study, grateful individuals have been reported to have their Hemoglobin A1c levels decrease by 9-13%. (UC Davis Health, 2015)
- Gratitude helps patients with heart illness. According to a study, the practice of gratitude contributes to reducing the biomarkers of inflammation by 7% among individuals diagnosed with congestive heart failure (UC Davis Health, 2015).

Mental, Psychological, and Spiritual Health Benefits

1. Gratitude boosts self-confidence. (Chen and Wu, 2014, pp. 349-362).
 2. Gratitude makes you more optimistic. (Peters et al., 2013, pp. 93-100).
 3. Gratitude makes us less materialistic. The relentless pursuit of material things offers nothing more than instant but short-term gratification, which leads to the craving for more. (Polak and McCullough, 2006).
 4. Gratitude makes you more forgiving. (Rey & Extremera, 2014, pp. 199-204). The element of gratitude has key contributions to interpersonal motivations to forgive along with optimism, emotional intelligence abilities, and the Big 5 personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism).
- Gratitude helps the battle against depression. While gratitude cannot cure depression, incorporating the practice of gratitude brings forth positive experiences and reduces stress-inducing hormones while increasing "feel-good" ones.

Emotional Benefits

1. Practicing and showing gratitude improves your mood.
 2. Gratitude helps manage grief. Grieving with gratitude helps us get through times of sorrow. While grieving is a painful process we have to experience over something or someone we have lost, gratitude also helps us appreciate the things left to us or those that we still have.
 3. Gratitude makes us see our memories in a positive light. (Watkins et al., 2008).
- Gratitude contributes to happiness. Several studies have confirmed that exhibiting the attitude of gratitude is associated with happiness triggered by having a stronger sense of appreciation for rewards, kindness received, and other positive aspects of life. (Emmons and McCullough, 2003; Seligman et al., 2005).

Social Benefits

1. Gratitude helps strengthen marriage/partner relationships. The positive emotions brought by gratitude play a unique role in establishing a high-quality relationship between couples. (Algoe et al., 2013, pp. 605-609).
2. Gratitude helps improve relationships with friends. Showing your appreciation to your friends reinforces clearer and more comfortable communication which play significant roles in resolving possible issues and misunderstanding (Lambert & Fincham, 2011, pp. 50-60).
3. Gratitude strengthens family support. A family that practices gratitude religiously is more likely to have improved well-being.

Gratitude fosters a healthy social circle. People who practice gratitude and express it on a regular basis are more likely to attract people with the same mindset. (Wood et al., 2010).

May gratitude grow in your life so that you have the abundant life God desires for you.

Blessings to you for a wonderful and meaningful Advent and Christmas Season - Rev. Gloria

December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 Christmas Cantata Spanish/English 11:30am Pet Food Bagging Play Rehearsal 11:30am	4	5 Hand Bells 5:00pm Choir 7:00pm	6 Trustees 6:00pm Council 6:00pm	7 Happy Birthday Santiago Quinteros	8	9
10 Spanish/English 11:30am Deacons Meeting Play Rehearsal 11:30am Happy Birthday Lauri Hasler	11	12 Choir 7:00pm	13 Blue Christmas 7:00pm	14 Happy Birthday Chase Bauer	15	16 Mandatory Play Dress Rehearsal 9am
17 Christmas Play and Dinner	18 Happy Birthday KJ Kinder	19 Choir 7:00pm Happy Birthday Iris Morales	20	21 Nourish Phx 8:15am	22	23
24 Candlelight Christmas Eve Service 7:30pm NO Morning Service	25 Merry Christmas!	26 Newsletter Deadline	27 Happy Anniversary Jill M. and Cindy W.	28	29	30
31 Spanish/English 11:30am						

Council Meeting: November 8, 2023

The ECC Council Meeting for November 8, 2023 was called to order by Moderator Lisa Herrmann at 7:12 P.M.

The Treasurer's Report: was given by Kathy Van Etten; the expenses are now current. The Endowment Fund's performance was up and down for October. The yard sale proceeds were disbursed to the general fund and to the youth activities.

The ECC Council Meeting was paused briefly at 7:27 P.M. to allow the adjournment of the ECC Trustees Meeting.

The ECC Council Meeting resumed at 7:29 P.M.

Prayer was led by Kathy Stock.

Attendees: Kathy Stock, Melanie Herrmann, Steve Holloway, Kathy Van Etten, Lisa Herrmann, Steve Barrett, Todd Montague, Pastor Gloria Smith, and John Hasenstab.

The minutes from the ECC Council Meeting held October 11, 2023 were reviewed, motioned, and accepted by all in attendance into the church records.

Trustees Report: given by Steve Holloway; the water meter cover has been stolen, and it has been reported to the city of Phoenix for replacement. Repairs are needed in the Fellowship Hall's Nursery area due to a possible water leak. Software updates are needed for the Church's office equipment.

Deacons Report: given by John Hasenstab; the Deacons will be meeting on Sunday, November 12, 2023. The Disaster Buckets are being worked on, and the 2024 budget for the Deacons has been submitted.

Stewardship Report: given by John Hasenstab; the bookmarks are done and so far have been well received, the 2024 pledge cards will be completed shortly and ready for Loyalty Sunday.

Financial Report: given by John Hasenstab; the monies are in the bank.

Religious Education Report: given by Kathy Van Etten; the Christmas Play has been chosen, and roles cast, we are rehearsing and progressing. The yard sale work done by all is greatly appreciated. The R.E. budget for 2024 is in.

Memorial Fund Report: given by Kathy Stock; printed copies were distributed to all in attendance.

Outreach Report: given by Melanie Herrmann; nothing new to report, but the 2024 Outreach Budget is in.

Hospitality Report: given by Todd Montague and Kathy Stock, the Holidays are approaching and the Fellowship Hour treat sign-up sheets are posted. The 2024 Hospitality Budget is in.

Pastor's Report: given by Pastor Gloria Smith; the frames for the evacuation maps will be ordered. UCC's Rev. Dr. Barbara Peacock is retiring. UCC Executive Council is planning on meeting on January 26, 2024. Possible donations for the Pet Memorial Garden are coming in 2024. We must remember to contact our sick and shut-in members and friends.

Moderator's Report: given by Lisa Herrmann; areas of improvements needed: Neighborhood Relations, and possible a go fund me project are being researched. January projects scheduled are the Church Directory and Servant Keeper updates.

Nominating Committee Report: given by Kathy Van Etten; the Nominating Committee met and candidates were selected and contacted for upcoming terms.

The Church calendar was reviewed, updates and changes were made.

Old Business: the 2024 budget proposal was reviewed, and in section 6: Administration; Office Equipment-Maintenance Supplies, \$1, 000.00 was added to upgrade the Office computer and software. Kathy Van Etten made a motion that the proposed budget be accepted, it was seconded, and accepted by all in attendance for approval. The ECC Staff Christmas gifts this year will follow the traditional way. The annual Christmas Dinner, council will provide the list and will be finalized in the Council's December meeting.

New Business: None.

The ECC Council November 8, 2023 meeting was adjourned at 9:53 P.M. by Moderator Lisa Herrmann.

Encanto Community Church
United Church of Christ
2710 North 7th Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85007



Rev. Dr. Gloria Smith, Minister
Lisa Herrmann, Moderator
Jill Mahoney, Choir Director
Genevieve Benham, Organist
Tony Lusania, Caretaker
Michelle Lusania, Office Administrative Assistant

Encanto Community Church
United Church of Christ
Phone # 602.266.4602
www.EncantoCommunityChurch.org

