

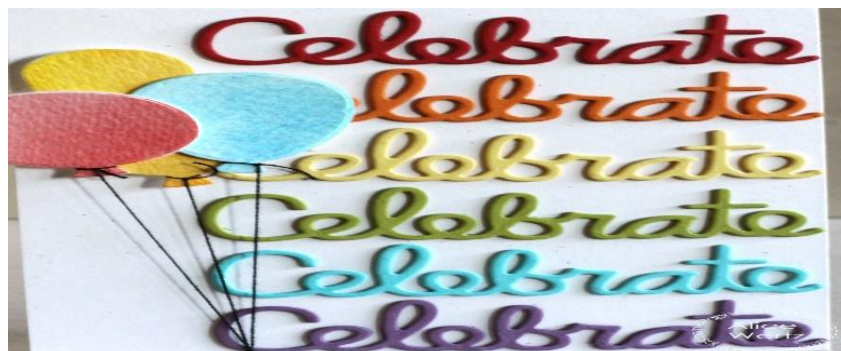
December 2023
Shepherd's Voice
JESUS IS BORN!
HAVE A BLESSED CHRISTMAS.



Happy Birthday!

Mike H	4 th	Denise H	20 th	Femi and Tinu	23 rd
John D	9 th	Kathy A	23 rd	Tom and Suzanne	29 th
Liam	11 th	Ava H	23 rd		
Jane C	15 th	Deb G	26 th		
Tom M	19 th	Lynn O	30 th		
Wanda C	20 th				

Happy Anniversary!



Happy Holidays people say. Doesn't include only Happy New Year. There are other religious holidays that are celebrated close to our Christian holiday.



First there is Hanukkah. This year it starts in the evening on December 7th. It lasts eight days. It is a joyous Jewish festival of lights. It has been celebrated for thousands of years in what is today Israel. It commemorates the recovery of Jerusalem and dedication of the Second Temple (also known as Herod's Temple) at the beginning of the Maccabean Revolt against the Seleucid Empire in the 2nd century BCE. The Maccabees were a priestly family of Jews who organized the revolt against the Greek Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV. He had persecuted the Jews and forbid them to believe in the

God of Israel. The celebration consists of lighting candles on a menorah each night, singing special songs and reciting the Hallel prayer (6 Psalms 113-118). The food that is enjoyed are latkes (potato pancakes), sufganiyot (beignet and jelly donut mix). Playing games like dreidel (spinning top) and giving Hanukkah gelt (chocolate candy shaped as coins). (Wikipedia)



Next on the calendar is Christmas. I'll leave you to remember how you celebrate this joyous day celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, our Savior.



Kwanzaa begins on December 26th. It is celebrated by the African – American culture for 6 days. It was created by Maulana Karenga, born Ronald McKinley Everett in 1941. He is an American activist and professor of African studies. It is based on African harvest festival traditions from various parts of West and Southwest Africa, first celebrated in 1966 in the United States. In 2015, a survey revealed about 6 million people, including children, planned on celebrating. It celebrates heritage, unity and culture The symbols

are a mat called Mkeka where other symbols are placed. Each day is a different celebration. A candle holder for 7 candles, Mazao (crops), Mahindi (corn), Kikombe cha Umoja (unity cup for giving thanks to African Ancestors). Other presentations include Nguzo Saba poster, showing the 7 principles of African Heritage (unity, self determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith). Also included is the flag (Bendera, a black, red and green flag). African books and artworks to represent values and concepts of the African culture and contributions to community and reinforcement. The ceremony may include drumming and musical selections, libations and a reading of the African Pledge and Principles of Blackness. Discussions of African history, candle lighting, and a feast of faith on the sixth day. The feast (Karamu) was developed in Chicago in 1971 during a Pan – African movement. It is a one pot stew from many traditions, such as Ghanaian groundnut stew and red stewed black eyed peas. Also included are Cajun jambalaya and Creole gumbo. (Wikipedia, Woman's Day)

Worship During Advent Season:

Regular worship is at 10:30 on Sunday mornings.

Series: Jesus, The True Star of Christmas

12/3 - 1st Sunday of Advent - The True Star of Christmas (Matthew 2:1-12)

12/10 - 2nd Sunday of Advent - Honor the Stable-Born King (Isaiah 9:16)

12/17 - 3rd Sunday of Advent – Joy to the Whole Wide World (John 3:16-17)

12/20 - Blue Christmas Service, 6:00pm for those who are grieving any type of loss.

12/24 – 4th Sunday of Advent - Christ, The Magnificent Message (Luke 1:26-38, 2:19)

12/24 – Christmas Eve Service, 6:00pm, Embracing Christ (Luke 2:15-20)

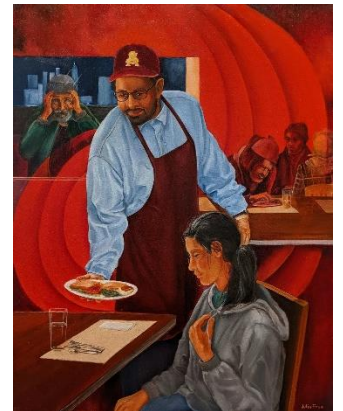
Our Christmas Eve offering will be directed to our homeless missions and ministries including Helping Hands, I-Help and Safe-Lot.

The Church office will be closed on December 27 & 28. Pastor Janet and Trina will be available, but will be working from home. Please contact them if you have a need.

12/31 - 10:30 Worship – It's Pajama Day and Puppet Mania will perform.

Our **January Sermon Series** is titled, "Let Hope Be Your Attitude." It is based on the Beatitudes and features the paintings of local artist, Julie Frye. Following the series, there will be an opportunity to go see the paintings on display at The Church of the Beatitudes in Phoenix, and to possibly meet the artist. To see the set of paintings on line goto

<https://noteworthyarts.com/the-beatitudes-paintings>



Adopt a Family

Gifts for families of Chaparral Elementary School

We have 3 families with a total of 9 children we wish to supply gifts for. For each child we will collect an outfit (top and bottom), a pair of shoes and a toy.

1. Choose a tag with the gift you will supply.
2. Write your name and phone number on the bottom portion.
3. Tear off the bottom portion and put it in the envelope or box. Keep the top.
4. Purchase the gift.
5. Wrap the gift if you can.
6. Attach the top portion of the tag to the gift.
7. Return the gift by Sunday December 17th.

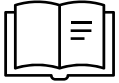
Sign-up if you want to help wrap the unwrapped gifts and deliver them to Chaparral Elementary School on Tuesday December 19th in the morning.

Action Steps:

Please submit items for the newsletter to Karen or Trina by the 17th of the month.



Family Fun Night **December 1st at 6:00pm in Fellowship Hall.** Cookie exchange and white elephant gift exchange. All are welcome.



Advent Book Study is **Thursday evenings at 6:30pm** in the pastor's office or on zoom. We are reading UMC Bishop Will Willimom's book Heaven and Earth. Books are \$12. Contact Trina if interested.



Cactus book club will be meeting on **December 6th at 6pm** in room 1. They are reading The Last Thing He Told Me by Laura Dave.



Men's Breakfast **December 9th at 8:00am.** Denny's at 43rd and Peoria. All men are invited.



Martha's Circle Christmas Sale!! December 10th. Before and after the worship service.



Blue Christmas service **December 20th at 6pm** for those that have lost loved ones.

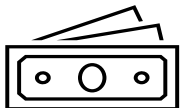
Birth

Christmas Eve service **December 24th** at 6pm.



	Oct	Jan-Oct
Income:	\$32,475.77	\$119,884.93
Expense:	\$29,682.28	\$113,502.49
Total:	\$2,793.49	\$6,382.44

You may contribute your offering to the church Online. There are many options. You could go to You Tube, Facebook, or Pay pal. You could also have a direct withdrawal from your checking account. Contact Trina, Wanda or Don with questions.



Special Offering Sundays for 4th Quarter of the Year

December 27th United Methodist Student Day

Church Envelopes are available on the Welcome Wagon in the Narthex.



Note new church phone number. 602-758-3473. This is a cell phone.
You may leave a text and it will be answered.

December 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
Worship 10:30 am Worship On-Line Any Time			Office Open 12:00 - 4:00 pm Prayer Group 1:30 pm zoom	Office Open 12:00 - 4:00 pm Advent Study 6:30 pm PO Women's AA 6:00 pm Fellowship Hall & kids Rm 1 Men's AA 7:30 pm, FH	Fun Friday Cookie Exchange 6pm	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Worship 10:30 am Worship On-Line Any Time Omar Rm 1 5-7 pm	Omar rm 1 4-6 pm		Office Open 12:00 - 4:00 pm Prayer Group 1:30 pm zoom Cactus Book Club 6pm Rm 2 Omar Rm 1 4-6 pm	Martha Circle 10:30 am rm 1 Office Open 12:00 - 4:00 pm Advent Study 6:30 pm PO Women's AA 6:00 pm Fellowship Hall & kids Rm 1 Men's AA 7:30 pm, FH		Jewelry Making with Sandee, rm 1 noon - 4 pm
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Good Grief Group 9am rm 1 Martha Circle Sale Worship 10:30 am Worship On-Line Any Time SPRC 12:30 pm	Omar rm 1 4-9 pm	Lake Biltmore BlockWatch 6:30 pm fellowship hall	Office Open 12:00 - 4:00 pm Prayer Group 1:30 pm zoom I Help 6pm FH	Office Open 12:00 - 4:00 pm Martha's Circle Luncheon Advent Study 6:30 pm PO Women's AA 6:00 pm Fellowship Hall & kids Rm 1 Men's AA 7:30 pm, FH		
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Worship 10:30 am Worship On-Line Any Time Board 12:30 pm	Lake Biltmore Estates HOA F.H.		Office Open 12:00 - 4:00 pm Prayer Group 1:30 pm zoom Cactus Park Community Alliance Rm 1 6- 7:30 pm Blue Christmas 6:00 pm	Office Open 12:00 - 4:00 pm Advent Study 6:30 pm PO Women's AA 6:00 pm Fellowship Hall & kids Rm 1 Men's AA 7:30 pm, FH		Jewelry Making with Sandee, rm 1 noon - 4 pm
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Christmas Eve! Worship 10:30 am Worship On-Line Any Time Christmas Eve Service 6pm	Merry Christmas! 		Office CLOSED Prayer Group 1:30 pm zoom	Office CLOSED Women's AA 6:00 pm Fellowship Hall & kids Rm 1 Men's AA 7:30 pm, FH		
31	1	NOTES				

Worship 10:30 am
Worship On-Line
Any Time

Worship is available In-Person and On our YouTube channel SOVUMC.
Masks are Encouraged, but not Required unless trends change.
Enjoy coffee and snacks after the worship service.

Leadership Team Members

Chair	Suzanne	Finance	Don	SPRC	Femi
Facilities	Suzanne	Finance Secty	Wanda	Security	Karen
At Large	Gina	At Large	Vonnie	Tech	Trina
Lay Leader	Randal	Pastor	Janet		

Shepherd of the Valley UMC

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602-758-3473

Pastor Janet Culbertson SOVUMC@hotmail.com

www.shepherdofthevalleyphoenix.org

Bishop Carlo A. Rapanut, UMC Bishop

Reverend Javier Olivares, District Superintendent