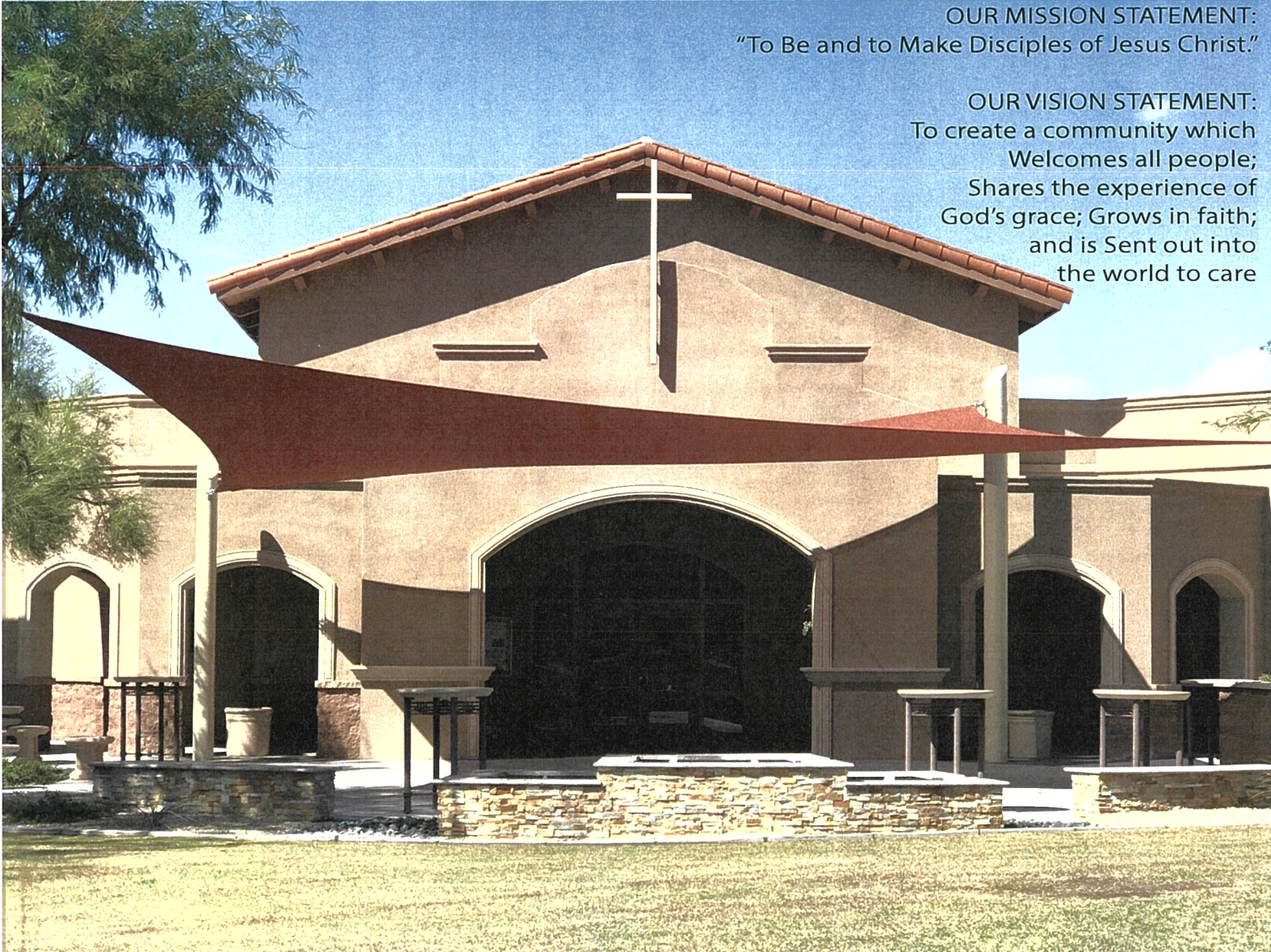


# OUR FAITH IN ACTION

## 2024 Annual Report of the Congregation

OUR MISSION STATEMENT:  
"To Be and to Make Disciples of Jesus Christ."

OUR VISION STATEMENT:  
To create a community which  
Welcomes all people;  
Shares the experience of  
God's grace; Grows in faith;  
and is Sent out into  
the world to care



*Living Water*  
Lutheran Church

9201 E. Happy Valley Rd, Scottsdale, AZ 85255  
(O) 480.473.8400 | (F) 480.473.2625

## **Table of Contents**

2024 Statistical Report...p. 1  
 Baptisms, Weddings, Confirmations & Deaths...p. 2  
 New Members Received...p. 2  
 Church Staff and Council...p. 2  
 Pastor Mark's Report...p. 3-6  
 Pastor Shari's Report...p. 6-7  
 Council President's Report...p. 7-8  
 Ministry and Mission Group List...pp. 9-10  
 Caring Mission Group Teams...p. 11  
 Service Mission Group Teams...pp. 12-18  
 Learning Mission Group Teams...pp. 18-21  
 Fellowship Mission Group Teams...pp. 21-22  
 Witness Mission Group Teams...pp. 23-24  
 Worship and Music Mission Group Teams... pp. 25-26  
 Giving Mission Group Teams...p. 26  
 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes...pp. 27-29  
 2025 Annual Meeting Agenda...p. 30  
 2024 Financial Statements...Insert  
 2025 Plan for Financial Ministry...Insert

**LWLC Annual Meeting will be held on  
 February 9, 2025 @ 11:00 am**

## **2024 STATISTICAL REPORT**

<b>2024 MEMBERSHIP</b>	<b>Baptized</b>	<b>Confirmed</b> <small>(15 years and older)</small>
As of 1.1.2024	324	307
Members Received by New Member Class	24	24
Members Received by Transfer	x	x
Member Received by Baptism	1	1
Members Removed by Transfer	x	x
Members Removed by Death	-3	-3
<b>Total Membership as of 12.31.2024</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>324</b>

## **AVERAGE WEEKLY ATTENDANCE**

2019 – 190
2020 -235
2021 – N/A due to Covid
2022 – 130 Online -103
2023 —118
2024 – 142 Online -117

## BAPTISMS, CONFIRMATIONS AND DEATHS 2024

### BAPTISMS – 1

Sydney Weinzell	4.28.2024
-----------------	-----------

### CONFIRMATIONS – 9

Vivian de Montmollin	11.10.2024
Lainy Hampton	11.10.2024
Mya Hampton	11.10.2024
Allison Handley	11.10.2024
Caroline Ruff	11.10.2024
Henry Ruff	11.10.2024
Shaina Weisman	11.10.2024
Summer Weisman	11.10.2024
Piper Wilde	11.10.2024

### DEATHS – 3

Lee Stenehjerm	2.28.2024
Nancy Manseth	10.8.2024
Greta Lee Tryhus	10.10.2024

### NEW MEMBERS RECEIVED – 15

Ginny Alexander	3.18.2024
Suki Kisling	3.18.2024
John and Sue Hornacek	3.18.2024
Suzanne Wagner	3.18.2024
Ted and Pat Stump	11.3.2024
Jan McNeeley	11.3.2024
Lynn McLarky	11.3.2024
Fred and Cherie Bruckner	11.3.2024
Brian and Rozenah Goebel	11.3.2024
Seth and Christina Hall	11.3.2024

## CHURCH STAFF 2024

- **Senior Pastor and Building Manager:**  
Mark Rossman
- **Pastor:** Shari Bernau
- **Office and Communications Manager:**  
Jennifer Kelsh
- **Finance Manager:**  
Stephanie McLean
- **Director of Music:** Christina Hall
- **Associate Director of Music:** Scott Sims
- **Praise Band:** Scott Sims, Christina Hall,  
Dave Dugwyler, Dan Wiebe, Bradley Wallace,  
Marcie Donavon, Jennifer Dorsch, Frances  
DeBruyn
- **Sunday School:** Kris Crow, Pam Landon,  
Heidi Ruff
- **VBS Leader:** Kris Crow

## CHURCH COUNCIL 2024

- **President:** Darnell Pettengill
- **Vice President:** Sue Boyd
- **Secretary:** Lisa Moehn
- **Treasurer:** Steve Umland
- **Members at Large:** James King, Jill  
Wehr and Jay Hoenig

**SENIOR PASTOR MARK ROSSMAN'S REPORT*****The Report of the Pastor******Annual Congregational Meeting—February 2025***

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***What a wonderful place . . .*** in the world it is in which we live. We have truly been blessed as people of God. In the 25 years that people have gathered in worship and praise of our Lord at Living Water Church, a great many things have taken place. In each and every one of these happenings God has been very present and visible in the life of Living Water Church.

This year we celebrate twenty-five years as a congregation. What began as a dream, financially supported by Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church of Minneapolis, has turned into a powerful example of faith in North Scottsdale. As we look back over these years gone by, more importantly, we look forward to the years ahead. Years where we see continued growth in what we offer to our neighbors both locally and around the world. As we ***Open the Door to do More***, we do so with the energy and commitment that has brought us to this place. It is through this door that we will discover that there is so much more for us to do, so many opportunities to serve our Lord in the name of Living Water Lutheran Church.

There is a popular misconception among Christians that blessings from God can only be found in what we perceive to be the positive aspects of life. Nothing could be further from the truth! When we were baptized into the body of Christ, adopted as children of God, we received the promise of God's presence within our lives - not at specific times, but present in our lives always. This is important for us to understand both from a personal standpoint and a corporate standpoint, because God

stands with us through thick and thin, through what we perceive to be the bad times and the good. With God's presence in our lives anything and everything is possible.

God has blessed Living Water Church in ways which we may not wholly understand nor clearly see. What we do know is the blessing we have in the people here. We are unique in the level of care and compassion that exists here - compassion that continually rises above contention and strife, a compassion that reaches out to those in need. We have been blessed with a creative and energetic following. The folks who have taken active leadership positions expend an unbelievable amount of time and energy creating and maintaining a ministry that serves all of God's people.

We have been especially blessed by God within controversy and strife. During times of greatest challenge, God's presence is never more strongly felt and the promises of God never more pertinent.

*(Psalm 55:22) Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.*

Our history as a congregation has demonstrated time and time again, that even in the very worst of times, God's presence not only sustains the people of God, but greatly enriches the people, too.

***What a glorious ministry . . .*** we have found in this place. While quite often individuals have equated ministry with work, I have found it to be not a burden, but rather another very real blessing. Ministry is God - at least in the manner in which by doing the work of ministry

allows people to see the presence of God in their lives. Within ministry what we find is the working of God's Holy Spirit. God's presence leading and guiding the work we do on God's behalf here in the northern Scottsdale area.

The task of ministry is something that we are called to do. Ministry is not something set aside for the man or woman who wears the funny collar or flowing dress on Sunday. Ministry is the work of God's people for God's creation. It is the task of every Christian to see that ministry is done, not just from a perspective of oversight, but in a very real and grounded way. We are called to do the work of the Lord in this time and place.

Being part of the body of Christ, being part of any congregation is not a matter of simply attending worship on a weekly basis. In being an active member of the body of Christ means that we are called to actively serve God in the areas of ministry that are set before each of us. Whether it be a call to teaching, to exceptional stewardship, to outreach, to a sharing ministry, to administration, to Word and Sacrament, to counseling, to areas of congregational service, to visitation, or any other aspect of ministry, we all have been called to serve God in a greater capacity than placing ourselves in a seat on Sunday. We have been called to something greater than to evaluate the work that everyone else accomplishes - we have been called into the service of our Lord - to do God's work - to live a life dedicated in a very visible and profound way to offer service and honor to the Lord of our lives.

***What a perfect time . . .*** to be part of God's family. There has been no other time in history that it has been so right to do ministry. We live in a society that is more nonreligious than ever before. We live in the midst of a community where the unchurched vastly outnumber those who hold a church affiliation. But what there also exists is a great

yearning for a greater sense of spirituality, a greater understanding and growth of the individuals' relationship with God. What a perfect time to be part of the church. In the midst of this societal quest, we have the opportunity to reach more people than ever before. Our more fundamental brothers and sisters have begun to explore the vast richness of these struggling folks - we too, ought to be doing the same.

But there is a catch, of sorts. These folks are not part of organized religion because they see it as being very flawed. They look with a certain amount of disdain and skepticism at church professionals who wave the banner of the Gospel as folks who are out to get something for themselves. It is in the life of the committed, faithful follower that these unchurched individuals have a chance to better understand and see the benefits, blessings and joys that can be found in working with God's church on earth. But for us as a congregation to have the ability to reach out to these folks, we must have people who are willing to share the message of joy and hope that can be found at Living Water. We need to have folks who are willing to step out of their regular routine to talk and walk the story of faith with these searching souls. It is a perfect time, but the catch is that we need folks who are willing to go out and share what Living Water means to them - to share that message at work, to share that message at school, to share that message at the store or on the tennis or pickleball court, golf course or hiking trail. In doing so, then and only then, will individuals searching for a better way be able to answer the question of "*what will being a member of Living Water do for me?*"

***It is a time to communicate . . .*** the message of the love of Christ to people inside and outside the walls of this congregation. It is time to communicate that love in the action of our lives - in that which we do and that which we

say to others, and about others.  
Communication is the key.

But solid communication must go in a couple of different directions. First and foremost, we must communicate the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. As with most things, communication means a couple of different things. This includes communicating the Gospel in what we do, in what we say, in how we act, in how we treat others, and in how we make decisions concerning the world.

In our dealings with others in our church family, it is of vital importance that we communicate with one another. Nothing can be more damaging to the relationships we have with one another than talk that takes place concerning others. In organizations such as ours, talk that criticizes, puts down, or condemns the lives and actions of another can be quite destructive. When this occurs trust is destroyed, and the ability we have to work with one another is brought to ruin. We all must be keenly aware of what we say and how that talk can affect the feelings and lives of another. The people who volunteer their time do their utmost to produce fine programs, to see that the Lord's house is kept in good order and that the ministry groups of this congregation function on a very high level. But as with all things, nothing is perfect, including the work we do. But rather spend time and energy letting people know what was not accomplished in the work they did, would it not be more beneficial if we used that time and energy to assist individuals in the tasks they sent out to do? As members of the body of Christ we have been called to be the ones who build up the community, not tear it down. We all need to be aware of the power we hold in the words we share with others.

***It is a time of challenge . . .*** as we look forward to 2025. The challenges before us are not simply financial in nature. The challenges that

lie before us are ones facing all of Christendom. In the midst of distrust, violence and hatred that have so violated our world, how do we continue to communicate and live the command of Christ to love. Love not just those around us but love those who are strangers in our lives and in our world.

As always, one of the challenges is budgetary. The decision of the Council is one that has been Spirit led. The Council at Living Water believes that God does not challenge individuals or organizations toward the unreachable. In fact, we believe that God does not set us to a task without first equipping us with that which we need to see the task accomplished, the goal met.

***As we look back . . .*** over 2024 it is obvious that we can see how richly the Lord has blessed us as a congregation. 2024 saw a rise in new members and the return of some old friends. We celebrated the gift of the new Prayer Garden in the courtyard. We witnessed the repainting of the campus, a sprucing up of our landscaping and a move toward better sustainability with new plumbing fixtures. We have also celebrated new people stepping in to coordinate areas of leadership within the life of Living Water.

But not everything is new. During the past year people who have long been working at a variety of tasks have continued their grace-filled work. The individuals who serve on our Ministry Teams continue to exhibit a high level of love and caring that has become a hallmark of the life of Living Water Church. And then there are the myriads of people who work behind the scenes to prepare us for our worship, pay the bills, keep things running, the facility up to date, and our worship space tastefully and beautifully decorated.

***The promise of the future . . .*** has seldom been stronger than it is as we enter into 2025. There are a great many challenges that lie ahead, but with everyone working together, there is not a challenge that cannot be met. The Lord has greatly blessed each and every one of us simply in allowing us to be part of His family here at Living Water Church. As we move further into 2025, let us show our gratitude by making this a banner year for Living Water Church. Let us proclaim 2025 as the year of the Lord – a year where we celebrate the beginning of another 25 years together. Blessings to one and all.

Together in Ministry,  
Mark A. Rossman  
Pastor - Living Water Church



#### **PASTOR SHARI BERNAU'S REPORT**

The enthusiastic energy, new faces and new friendships blossoming that I have witnessed here at Living Water in 2024 are beautiful blessings as we come out of the Covid slump. I think back to a couple of years ago when many seats were empty, and the singing was not as full and joy-filled, and I am reminded that God can indeed breathe life into old bones and bring about a new and vibrant community.

#### **Annual Events for Moms in the Community**

On Friday, September 13, we hosted an event for moms called "Restore." There were three speakers, and 56 moms from all over the valley showed up, plus our volunteers and 10 kids that enjoyed the nursery and playground. As usual, our volunteers showed people what Living Water hospitality is all about, and people felt so warmly welcomed onto our campus.

Providing Faith Formation and Pastoral Leadership for Children, Youth, and Families

#### **Nursery**

The nursery has been used by our families who have kids who are a little too young for Family Sunday School, so they are very grateful for it. Also, we are happy to keep it open if families need it during worship as well. However, statistics show that children who attend worship with regularity are more likely to stay connected to a faith community in their adulthood.

#### **Milestone events**

These events help us to stay faithful to the baptismal promises we make as we walk alongside the children of our faith family and celebrate the milestones of their faith journey. The following milestones we have celebrated this year include Graduation, Back-to-School blessing, and Confirmation.

#### **Children's Ministry**

Kris Crow, Heidi Ruff and Pam Landon have amazing gifts for working with children and I am blessed to work with them. This year we have been able to provide Family Sunday School, a Lenten Fair, which had 13 kids and their families in attendance and an Advent Fair, which had 15 kids and their families in attendance. We were also blessed to have the opportunity to join the Adult Choir for a song in the Christmas Cantata. This was such a wonderful experience for the kids to be welcomed and embraced by our talented choir members and to be a part of something so special.

#### **Youth Ministry**

In July, we had 6 people participate in the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans. On August 11, the youth provided the sermon in worship and shared their stories and pictures with the congregation. As usual, this experience was priceless for all who attended. We even had an extra blessing this year as we got to connect with an adult member of our

congregation, who is also the president of WELCA, Myrna Ulland.

A big thanks to Kris Crow and Julie Ann Walker who have provided leadership in the fundraisers for youth trips, and to all of you in the congregation who attend our fundraisers and show your support for our youth in a variety of ways. The two main fundraisers for 2024 were the Ladies Tea and Moonlight and Music.

### **Confirmation**

2024 was another great year for Confirmation. In addition to learning about the tenets of our faith, we are blessed to be able to participate in the assembly of the Health Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief, and Julie Ann invites us to her house for a Christmas party every year (including the families) to have some fellowship time and write Christmas cards to some people in our congregation. On November 11, nine students completed the program, and affirmed their baptisms in the Rite of Confirmation. We currently have five students in the class.

### **Intergenerational Ministry**

In an attempt to foster relationships between the generations each year, I provide a few events that are engaging for people of all ages. On February 19, we had 13 people volunteer at the Foster Alliance. In September, the whole congregation participated in the God's Work. Our Hands. service project. And then in November, we had 10 participants serve at Feed My Starving Children.

Provide Ministry of Word and Sacrament, Pastoral Care, and support the ministries and volunteers in the congregation:

I have the opportunity to lead worship every Sunday and either preside at communion or preach. I also have the pleasure of making visits and phone calls and attending the

Tuesday Women's Study to learn and connect with the women in the congregation. I also oversee the Eucharistic Ministry, offer a Healing Service, host the Appreciation Luncheon, serve as liaison to the Northeast Valley Consortium, as well as attend many of our fellowship events throughout the year.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Pastor Shari L. Bernau



### **COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Grace and Peace to you in the name of our Lord & and Savior Jesus Christ!

A year of growth in faith and service. That's what comes to mind when I think of the life of Living Water in 2024. Many of the programs and activities that were resumed post COVID are flourishing again. While just two examples, our Eucharistic Ministry is again seeing weekly visits made to home bound individuals who are receiving communion and fellowship from members of Living Water and our Prayer Shawl Ministry is bringing comfort to both youth and seniors. Thanks to all who have resumed and expanded their volunteer roles in leading our programs and ministry efforts.

Last year also saw the creation of new programs and initiatives. We have ready hosted several Red Cross Blood drives with more to come in 2025. Thanks to Pastor Shari for organizing a number of successful new events including: Restore (a gathering focusing on the needs of new moms); Combating Loneliness in the Age of Social Media (a discussion w youth) and a Healing Service. Council will also pursue a number of ideas that were generated from those attending the Volunteer Appreciation luncheon.



Finally, despite some unplanned campus needs for maintenance and repair, we remained on sound financial footing. The congregation adopted a faith-based budget for 2024 and members and visitors responded by funding the ministries which serve the needs of the most vulnerable in our community and beyond. A special thanks to Stee Umland, who as Treasurer, has enhanced our cash management, provided periodic financial updates and greatly assisted in the stewardship campaign.

In 2025, we'll introduce the resumption of Living Water's Endowment Fund and roll out new resources for those interested in learning more about Legacy Gifting.

In closing, it has been rewarding to serve with Pastors Mark and Shari and Council members who are compassionate, caring, faith driven servants. Thank you all for your leadership at Living Water! On behalf of Council, we look forward in 2025 to continuing to fulfill Living Water's vision of "To create a community which Welcomes all people; Shares the experience of God's grace; Grows in faith, and is Sent Out into the world to care."

Darnell Pettengill  
Council President



## MISSION GROUPS AND MINISTRY TEAMS



### **Caring – Mission Program Leader: Debbie Anderson and Susan Umland**

- Letter Writing Ministry
- Prayer Team
- Heat Respite Lunch Pack Program
- God's Work. Our Hands.
- Prayer Shawl Ministry



### **Service – Mission Program Leader: Debbie Anderson and Sue Umland**

Service—Mission Program Leader: Myrna Ulland

- "A Better Chance" Diaper Closet
- Angel Tree (NourishPhx)
- Arizona Tax Credit—Habitat for Humanity
- Arizona Tax Credit—Navajo Evangelical Lutheran Mission School
- Asylum-Seekers Needs (LSS-SW)
- ELCA Good Gifts
- ELCA World Hunger
- God's Work. Our Hands.
- Grace Lutheran Church—Homeless Project/Grace Room
- Grace Lutheran Church—Pancake Breakfast
- Habitat for Humanity
- Heat Respite Lunch Pack Program
- Hunger Jar
- La Sagrada Familia Lutheran Church—Food Pantry
- La Sagrada Familia Lutheran Church

- Medical Equipment Lending
- Library
- La Sagrada Familia Lutheran Church—Tamale Sale
- Lunches for Learning
- Lutheran Disaster Response (ELCA)
- Lutheran World Relief (LWR) Quilt and Kit Ministry—Piecemakers Quilting—Personal Care Kits
- LWLC Book Drive (Assistance League Phx)
- NE Valley Consortium
- Pocket Pal Quilt Ministry (AZ Foster Children) Prayer Shawl Ministry
- Refugee Resettlement Program (LSS-SW)
- Souper Bowl of Caring
- Thanksgiving Food Drive (Vista del Camino)



### **Learning - Mission Program Leader: Pastor Shari Bernau**

- Children's Faith Formation – Family Sunday School
- Confirmation
- Living Water Library
- LWLCW – Living Water Lutheran Church Women
- Men's Breakfast Bible Study
- Sunday Morning Adult Forum
- Table Talks
- Tuesday Women's Study
- Vacation Bible School
- Youth Ministry



**Fellowship - Mission Program Leader:  
Ellen Schoenbeck**

- Campus Crew
- Friday Morning Club
- Great Gatherings
- Lefse Making
- Living Art
- Saints and Sinners
- Splendid Table
- Sunday Morning Hospitality



**Worship and Music - Mission Program  
Leader: Pastor Mark Rossman**

- Altar Guild
- Choir
- Liturgical Arts
- Praise Band
- Prayer Partners
- Servant Teams
- Special Services
- Technical Services
- Worship and Music



**Witness - Mission Program Leader:  
Pastor Mark Rossman**

- Bike Riders Welcome
- Demographic Study
- New Member Class
- Pro-active Community Engagement (PACE)
- Website & Social Media



**Giving - Mission Program Leader:  
Pastor Mark Rossman**

- Annual Stewardship Campaign
- Building Fund
- Capital Campaign
- Endowment Giving
- General Fund
- Gifts of Appreciated Stock
- Special Gifts/Memorials

**MUTUAL MINISTRY TEAM****Carol Jacobson**

Leading and shaping the life of a congregation is much like tending a garden, our congregation leaders, like gardeners need to be constantly involved in planning, tending and assessing the life and function of its members. The Mutual Ministry Team was re-established two years ago as staff support and serves as a confidential sounding board with whom the staff, both clergy and lay, can share concerns and ideas. It assists the pastors and staff in the evaluation of their ministry as well as assisting the congregation in the evaluation of its ministry.

This committee consists of five members nominated by the Congregation Council, One member nominated by each pastor, one member by the lay staff, and two members nominated at large by the Council. Two years ago Denny Dumler got the Team off to a good start- understanding our role and our lay ministry mission. The current members as of 2025, are: Sharon Augenstein, Joan Sprinkle, Carol Jacobson, Nancy Philabaum, and Debra Anderson (who is replacing Julie Ann Walker). Julie Ann's leadership to the team and as Liaison to Pastor Shari has been a blessing. We will continue to work on providing information to the congregation regarding all ministries and how they can participate, focusing on encouraging new members. A ministry Fair and better follow-up to the "Time and Talent" surveys filled out by new and all members have been suggestions.

**CARING MISSION GROUP**

The Caring Mission group provides spiritual, prayer, and emotional support to members of Living Water Lutheran Church and their families and friends during times of need and times of celebration. Leadership is now shared among the team.

**LETTER WRITING MINISTRY – Pam Landon**

The note/letter writing ministry mails cards of encouragement to people listed on the Prayer Request page in the weekly *Connections* insert at LWLC. The cards are signed "From your friends at Living Water Lutheran Church" and let the recipients know that the church congregation is praying for them. In 2024, 134 notes were written and mailed by Julie Anderson, Lou Handley, Sally Harris, Pam Landon, Donna Pettengill, and Mary Nyberg. Pam Landon took over the leadership in 2024.

**PRAYER TEAM – Tuesday Women's Study**

In 2021, the Prayer Chain Ministry converted to a Prayer Team and incorporated the prayer ministry of the Tuesday Women's Study. Prayers are offered in support for members and friends of Living Water whose concerns were brought to our attention. Prayer requests may be made by calling the office (480-473-8400), completing a prayer request form in the narthex, or emailing [prayer@lwlcaz.org](mailto:prayer@lwlcaz.org)



### **SERVICE MISSION GROUP**

The Service Mission group leads a variety of projects providing gifts and support to people within Living Water, in our local communities, and throughout the world. These projects allow involvement from across the congregation in hands-on as well as financial support, including inter-generational projects. We are grateful for the passion and service of those who served as team leaders during 2024, including Debbie Anderson, Deb Bash, Sue and Eric Brash, Denny Dumler, Dave and Liz Gilkey, Jay Lucas, Steve and Beth McCarthy, Lisa Moehn, John and Judy Nerison, Ron and Cindy Ophaug, Don Pick, Kathie Schroedel, Kristin Smith, Myrna Ulland, and Sue Umland. With the formation of the Northeast Valley Consortium (NEVC) of five neighboring ELCA churches in 2021, we continue to work together in several social ministry areas. Our partnership with LSS-SW remains strong. In 2024, through our mission projects, members of Living Water provided generous support in the form of donated goods and financial resources outside of their annual support to the church. You can find additional details of our many ministry projects in the reports that follow.

### **“A BETTER CHANCE” DIAPER CLOSET**

#### **Debbie Anderson and Sue Umland**

In May 2024, we delivered a carload of diapers to the Diaper Closet in Avondale, a part of the ministry of our sister ELCA congregation Alleluia Lutheran Church. A few weeks later, Living Water sent a check for \$2000 to support this program. This helps to offset the cost of diapers for community members. Living Water began contributing to the Diaper Closet in 2018, but we pulled back during the pandemic

and after the closure of Alleluia Lutheran in 2022. The Diaper Closet has reorganized as a 501(c) 3. It is good to be back providing assistance to those in need.

### **ANGEL TREE – Jay Lucas**

The Angel Tree has become a traditional inspirational part of the LWLC Christmas season. Once again our congregation demonstrated our Christian beliefs by living the life of giving and caring Christians. We were able to make 97 Phoenix inner-city children (ages 3-13) happier at Christmas via the wonderful gifts our congregation purchased for them. The children were from 27 different families. Once again each of those families hung one of our special original hand-cut wooden Angel ornaments on their Christmas tree at their home.

The angels were designed and decorated by Leila and Wayne Burriss. Ron Ophaug, Gerry Cales and I carefully cut out and released the angels from a few boards of wood. Wayne and Leila Burriss artistically hung the angels on our church Angel tree. Janis Fjeld again solved the complicated logistics of matching gifts with recipient kids and families. The bagging team led by Bob Frost, assembled all the gifts into large bags for each of the recipient families.

In addition, our congregation also donated \$100. cash to NourishPhx. NourishPHX provides a year-round food/clothing bank as well as job and personal counseling. They have been most appreciative of LWLC gifts and view us as one of their pillars of giving at Christmas. We not only made over 120 of their clients very happy, but we once again brought excitement and encouragement to the NourishPHX staff.

Thanks to a much more refined publicity and communications effort this year, we set a record of getting all the angels plunked from the tree on the second Sunday. In the past we

have been pressed to get them all taken by the third Sunday.

**Way to Go LWLC!** Thank you all for being Angels!

### **ARIZONA TAX CREDIT –**

#### **Ron Ophaug**

Arizona permits taxpayers to claim multiple credits for contributions to charitable organizations and schools. Habitat for Humanity is one of these qualifying organizations. If donors designate their money to the NE Lutheran Coalition/Living Water Lutheran Church, this money is credited to our church and any home building we do with Habitat. By donating you can directly reduce your AZ state tax liability. For individuals, married couples filing separately, or single heads of households, the maximum Arizona State Tax Credit in 2024 is \$470. For married filing jointly there is a maximum Arizona State Tax Credit in 2021 of \$938. This means you can donate, and you will receive a dollar-for-dollar reduction in your AZ state income tax up to the maximum allowed.

### **AZ TAX CREDIT - NAVAJO EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN MISSION CHRISTIAN SCHOOL –**

#### **Denny Dumler**

Here is another AZ tax credit opportunity. This is through the Arizona Christian School Tuition Organization (ACSTO). One of the schools helped by this tax credit is the Navajo Evangelical Lutheran Mission Christian School in Rock Point. This school needs financial help, and the AZ tax credit is an opportunity for support. Here, you donate right to ACSTO and specifically designate the Navajo Evangelical Lutheran Mission Christian school. In 2024 Donors can give up to \$1,459/\$731 (married/single) towards the original tax credit. Any donation above this amount will then go towards the Overflow Tax Credit, up to a maximum of an additional \$1,145/\$728. It is clearly explained at the ACSTO website, <https://acsto.org/>. They walk you

through the donation process right on the website. The website also provides the tax reporting instructions and documents needed if you participate in this unique tax credit opportunity. Also, note that donations can be made in early 2025 up to the April tax deadline.

### **ASYLUM-SEEKERS NEEDS –**

#### **Dave and Liz Gilkey**

We coordinate the Asylum-Seekers program through LSS-SW and continue to accept new clothing and snacks for those seeking permanent residency in the U.S. and who are traveling through the Phoenix area. Thank you for all the donations to our box located in the entry narthex.

### **ELCA GOOD GIFTS – Cindy and Ron Ophaug**

The ELCA Good Gifts program is a wonderful way to donate and share gifts with people in need. LWLC had another good year in donations! LWLC members gave over \$4,000, with several members doubling their donations. Great job donating LWLC!!! The Good Gifts program encourages members and friends to give and receive gifts throughout the year. Gifts include family farm, computer for learning center, goats, chickens, roosters, honeybees, fruit tree seedlings, vaccinations for a child, school fees for a girl, school supplies for a child, water jugs and many other items. For more ideas, check <https://goodgifts.elca.org>. Living Water has been very generous over the years with their gifts, and we hope that support lasts for the coming year. Thank you to all who donated and supported this program.

### **ELCA WORLD HUNGER – Living Water Congregation**

Living Water's support for ELCA World Hunger is lifted up each year during the 40 days of Lent. In 2024, we supported ELCA World Hunger through our Hunger Jar initiative (please see that report) In addition, you are

invited to join the 40-40-40 Challenge during Lent 2025. Watch for details in the Connections!

**GOD'S WORK. OUR HANDS. – Debbie Anderson and Susan Umland**

On September 8, 2024, Living Water's Congregation participated in a day of service project, Gods Work. Our Hands. We assembled 110 school kits for Lutheran World Relief to be distributed worldwide. The kits included notebooks, pencils, pens, sharpeners, erasers, crayons, and rulers, all deposited in lightweight backpacks. Congregants made the assembly of the backpacks quick and easy filling backpacks in assembly line fashion. A big thank you to the Congregation for your generous donations, both money and the needed supplies, and the help to complete this project on the Day of Service. We were also able to use a \$250 Thrivent Action Team gift card to fill in missing supplies. A special shout out to Flynn Moehn who donated his time and truck to facilitate the transfer of these kits, as well as quilts and personal care kits, to the Ingathering at Atonement Lutheran Church in Phoenix.

**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH HOMELESS PROJECT/GRACE ROOM – Steve and Beth McCarthy**

Donations of clean, usable clothing, shoes, new socks and underwear, for an adult population, and toiletry supplies (think travel size) help supply the Grace Room at Grace Lutheran. Steve and Beth McCarthy make routine deliveries to the Grace Room on behalf of Living Water.

**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH PANCAKE BREAKFAST – Don Pick**

Living Water did not participate in the Gerace Lutheran Church pancake breakfast during 2024. We will reach out to Grace Lutheran in 2025 and inquire about the opportunity for Living Water to volunteer. We will keep Living

Water informed when we volunteer in this wonderful ministry again to serve the Phoenix homeless with a hot pancake breakfast.

**HABITAT FOR HUMANITY – Ron Ophaug**

Living Water Lutheran Church has completed 19 houses as part of Habitat for Humanity. Since COVID, we have not taken part in any build in the Greater Phoenix area. We will be looking to help with a build this spring. Habitat for Humanity has built over 1,200 homes, completed more than 3,800 repairs, and improved living conditions for more than 5,000 Arizona families, all thanks to the generosity of donors and volunteers like LWLC. Consider donating through the AZ Tax Credit or volunteering.

**HEAT RESPITE LUNCH PACK PROGRAM – Deb Bash**

Living Water provided lunches on both July 8<sup>th</sup> and August 26<sup>th</sup> for the Heat Respite Program for the homeless at Grace Lutheran downtown. Our church was part of the five churches in the Northeast Valley Consortium that provided 10 lunches throughout the summer. Lunches include ham and cheese sandwiches, mustard/mayo/relish, packet, granola bar, fresh veggies, chips, and napkin as well as water. The funds for these lunches were provided by Ascension Lutheran Church and split between the 5 churches. Foothill Food Bank delivered many of the items and Spirit in the Desert also donated time slicing the ham. Thanks to the 14 volunteers in July and 12 volunteers in August who took time out of their Monday morning to put these lunch bags together. 300 bags were packed in July and 250 in August. Three carloads of lunches were delivered to the program. In total 3,000 lunches were served over the entire summer program.

**HUNGER JAR – LWLC Congregation/Ministry Team**

The Hunger Jar includes offerings of coins, bills, and checks dropped into the Hunger Jar in the sanctuary during worship services, as well as gifts given through online donations or designated gifts. These offerings are a source of significant funds for support to local and international organizations addressing hunger issues. 2024 continued to be a wonderful year of giving to the Hunger Jar; thank you LWLC! Our goal is to designate 50% to local hunger initiatives and 50% to global when we can. We sent our collections to St Mary's Food Bank and to ELCA World Hunger in July based on collections for the first half of the year. Each received \$1305.75. In January we will be distributing collections for the second half of the year to Foothills Food Bank and ELCA World Hunger. Each will receive \$944.50.

**LA SAGRADA FAMILIA LUTHERAN CHURCH FOOD PANTRY – LWLC Congregation /John and Judy Nerison**

Members of Living Water continue to donate non-perishable food items for the food pantry maintained by La Sagrada Familia for people in need among those served by that congregation. Living Water individuals have volunteered to monitor the cart and make regular deliveries of food items collected weekly in our grocery cart. A list of items in need by La Sagrada can be found in the folder in the grocery cart.

**LA SAGRADA FAMILIA LUTHERAN CHURCH MEDICAL LENDING LIBRARY –****Steve McCarthy**

An ongoing ministry provides donated durable medical equipment to La Sagrada familia church, allowing them to lend out the equipment to those in need who have no insurance coverage for items. Durable medical equipment includes crutches, canes, commodes, wheelchairs/cushions, walkers, hospital beds, recliners, etc. We had a

successful drive in 2024 and also facilitated the donation of a handicapped van from a friend of a congruent. We anticipate another collection drive in 2025.

**LA SAGRADA FAMILIA LUTHERAN CHURCH TAMALES SALE – Kristin Smith**

This year we once again had the opportunity to order handmade tamales from the members of La Sagrada Familia Church through their annual tamale fundraiser. We took orders after services beginning in early November. This year they raised their prices again, to \$30 per dozen and \$15 per half dozen - a sign of the times, I suppose. They once again offered flavor choices of green chili chicken, red chili pork, and cheese. This year we sold a total of 30 dozen, including some extra half dozens we ordered so that those attending our Christmas Cantata would be able to participate. This is an important fundraiser for the La Sagrada congregation, and they work a very long day preparing hundreds of dozens of tamales!

Total amount of sales- \$900

Total dollars paid to La Sagrada- \$920, including "keep the change" donations above the sales price.

**LUNCHESES FOR LEARNING – Denny Dumler**

For the past nine years, LWLC has sponsored two schools in rural Honduras for children and their families in the elementary school years that work to reverse the cycle of poverty that has existed for many years. With many families living on less than \$2 per day, children have been forced to beg for food for their families, suffered with malnutrition with lack of food, and forced to drop out of school without a basic education. The program has been in existence since 2005 and now serves 46 schools in the Valle Region of Honduras. During this time, dropouts have been reduced to nearly zero and steps toward reversing the cycle of poverty have occurred. Like the rest of the world, COVID-19 forced the schools and



the food deliveries to be halted, and the country experienced two major hurricanes in 2021 that have further had major negative impacts on the children of the region. The school year is from February through November, and the schools have now reopened and are again in full session. It will be a significant effort to regain the success we have experienced in the past, but it is clear the need is greater than ever. We have funded our support for the two schools with gifts from members and friends and through a portion of the offerings during the Lenten season. In 2024 we sent \$1,257 to Lunches for Learning.

#### **LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE – LWLC Congregation/Ministry Team**

Periodically, Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR), a ministry of the ELCA, is lifted up when tornadoes, fires, floods, hurricanes, and other disasters occur in the U.S or globally. Church members may support LDS through designated gifts to Living Water or give directly through online giving. In 2024, Living Water sent \$220 to Lutheran Disaster Response and will send the remaining amount \$1,588 in January for a total of \$1,808.

#### **LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF (LWR) QUILT AND KIT MINISTRY – Myrna Ulland**

Piecemakers Quilting: In 2024, we continued our quilting activity to make quilts for Lutheran World Relief (LWR) and for high school graduates from Living Water. 96 quilts were displayed and blessed in October and sent on their way at the AZ LWR ingathering in Phoenix. Generous donations to support shipping of the quilts (and kits) was accomplished with an envelope pinned to each quilt. Thank you, LWLC congregation! We also made five quilts for LWLC high school graduates, and one quilt for our Refugee program. We are grateful for designated quilt and fabric storage space in the Education Building (in the “Martha” classroom) . Information on

this ministry is available from LWR’s website: <https://lwr.org/quilts-and-kits>.

**Personal Care Kits:** The kits give hope to those who have lost everything through two bars of hand soap, a small bath towel, a toothbrush, comb, and nail clippers. We initiated this annual project at the beginning of Lent 2024 and were able to use a \$250 Thrivent Action Team gift card to supplement in-kind gifts from the congregation along with direct cash gifts. A total of 128 Personal Care Kits were assembled by our Confirmation students. These kits were delivered to a October 2024 LWR AZ Ingathering of kits and quilts. We plan to repeat this project during Lent 2025.

#### **LWLC BOOK DRIVE – Sue Brash**

Living Water conducts an ongoing collection of new and gently used books for babies through adults. These collections are then distributed throughout the Phoenix area by the Assistance League of Phoenix. Many of these books are chosen by Title I schools’ K-8 students. NourishPHX, UMOM New Day Centers’ chapel, Maggie’s Place women and children, St. Vincent de Paul clinic, Westside Head Start (20 sites), and N.O.A.H. Clinics’ clients also receive appropriate children’s and adult reading materials. Please remember we collect used magazines (especially with recipes), which are appreciated by adults striving to become bilingual. The UMOM interdenominational chapel gratefully distributes our donated religious titles to homeless families. In 2024, our congregation (with tremendous summer support by our Vacation Bible School attendees) gathered 3,643 well-received books! Since starting this project, LWLC has provided 25,173 books. We encourage you to please solicit book and magazine donations from family, friends, and neighbors. A collection basket is always available in the narthex. You can contact Sue Brash with any questions or arrange a large

pick-up. suebrash7@gmail.com or 602-317-9444

### **NE VALLEY CONSORTIUM – Pastor Shari**



The NE Valley Consortium (NEVC) includes five ELCA churches in our NE Valley Conference: Living Water and New Covenant in Scottsdale,

Christ the Lord in Carefree, New Journey in Fountain Hills, and Ascension in Paradise Valley. Pastors and lay representatives from the five churches meet regularly to plan and promote activities that connect members of the congregation with shared education and ministry opportunities. In 2024, the Consortium, in partnership with California Lutheran University, brought the Rev. Dr. Colleen Windham-Hughes, Associate Vice President for Mission and Identity to Scottsdale for a presentation at Living Water on April 13. Her presentation was called “Loneliness: How to live and serve faithfully to those within our community.”

NEVC joined Living Water for our VBS book drive and there was a total of 3,643 books donated! The Assistance League, recipient of the books, was very appreciative.

In the summer, Living Water and the Consortium participated in the Grace Lutheran Heat Respite lunch packing program. We were able to alleviate the devastating effects of the heat on many people who are homeless. Thanks to the leadership of Deb Bash and many volunteers, together, as a Consortium, we were able to feed over 3,000 people. We look forward to working together on many new adventures to make a difference in our world.

### **POCKET PAL QUILT MINISTRY – Myrna Ulland**

This quilt ministry was begun in 2020 through our Piecemakers Quilters, that of creating “pocket pal” quilts for the AZ Foster Children’s Program. Pocket Pal quilts

are smaller quilts, designed for children from infants through teens, and each quilt includes a “pocket” attached to the back of the quilt, secured at the top with Velcro. Quilts also include a stitched-on blank nametag stating the quilt was “made with love.” Children typically arrive at a foster children’s shelter with no personal items. The child’s name is written on the quilt nametag as they receive their quilt. Beyond the quilt being a symbol of caring, the pocket on the quilt allows the child to safely retain any personal care items. Quilters from Living Water previously joined up with quilters from a sister ELCA congregation, Ascension Lutheran in Paradise Valley. With the change in Ascension's church site in 2024, this ministry is currently on hold.

### **PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY – Kathie Schroedel**

In 2024 a new Caring Ministry was started based on an idea from Kathie Schroedel. She suggested a Prayer Shawl Ministry and agreed to lead this group. In its first year, 17 people participated and created 16 prayer shawls that the pastors can give to those who could benefit from a tangible example of God’s love. In 2025 they will be making Prayer Squares that will be available for the taking during Lent.

### **REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM (LSS-SW) – Dave and Liz Gilkey**

The Church saved over \$300 a month by closing the storage unit we were renting and using an upstairs room in the education building to store donated items. Lutheran Social Services - Southwest did pick up some items we had collected earlier in the year. Very few donations are coming in anymore. It is our recommendation that this committee be absorbed into the Consortium group that is working towards the same goals.

### **SOUPER BOWL OF CARING – Congregation/LWLC Youth**

Each February, a special offering is solicited to support the Souper Bowl of Caring (on Super Bowl Sunday), seeking gifts recognizing one of the two football teams in the big game, or to the “I don’t really care” option! This event was founded in 1990 as a national campaign with the goal of alleviating hunger and poverty. The youth of LWLC determine the organization to receive the funds. In 2024, \$635 was given to the Harvest Compassion Center.

### **THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE (Vista del Camino) – Lisa Moehn**

Living Water’s participation in the annual Thanksgiving Meal Program sponsored by the Vista del Camino Food Bank is one way we fight hunger on the local level. In 2024 we collected food items in a Living Water grocery bag and/or gift cards or cash. Using a list provided by Vista del Camino, LWLC members filled 44 grocery bags, along with a \$25 gift card, with the fixings for a Thanksgiving dinner. With the option of donating cash or gift cards separately, a total of \$575 in cash and \$1,100 in gift cards was collected. This will be used by Vista del Camino staff to purchase turkeys and hams to go with the non-perishable items and to purchase meals for distribution to members of the Scottsdale community who are families or seniors in need, homeless, or otherwise experiencing crisis.



### **LEARNING MISSION GROUP**

This team creates opportunities for learning for adults and children.

### **CHILDREN’S FAITH FORMATION: FAMILY SUNDAY SCHOOL –**

**Kris Crow, Heidi Ruff, Pam Landon and Pr. Shari Bernau** saw a Consistent attendance in 2024, and we love welcoming families of kids ages 4 through 5th grade two Sundays a month. We continue to use curriculum offered by Group Publishing entitled “Simply Loved - Where Kids Experience God’s Greatest Gift.” The curriculum focuses on helping kids discover the joy of a friendship with Jesus. The content includes a focus on the Bible story combined with great music videos and activities. In addition to classes, we have a Lenten Fair in the spring, and an Advent Fair in the fall.

### **CONFIRMATION – Pastor Shari Bernau**

Confirmation is a two-year program that provides an instruction/ experience in the Christian faith in the Lutheran Church. This serves as part of the fulfillment of the promises made by parents and sponsors on the day of baptism. At the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year, we had 12 confirmation students. Then, 9 students affirmed their baptism in November 2024. Currently, there are 5 students in the program.

### **LIVING WATER LIBRARY – Pastor Mark**

An opportunity exists for someone who has a love for library ministry and what it might look like in the future here at Living Water to step into this leadership role! It can be an individual or shared ministry. Please contact Mark if you have an interest.

**LWLCW – LIVING WATER LUTHERAN CHURCH WOMEN (formerly WELCA) – Myrna Ulland**

Our Women of the ELCA unit at Living Water is known as LWLCW – Living Water Lutheran Church Women. We continue to be an active Women of the ELCA unit and we represent the women’s ministry arm of our ELCA under a broad umbrella. We commit to the purpose of Women of the ELCA: As a community of women, created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world. At Living Water, many women are participants in ministries and mission teams and projects, and that is a good fit for our congregation. You’ll see women supporting funeral receptions, involved in Bible study, quilting ministry, fellowship teams, prayer shawls, writing ministry, liturgical arts, and even advocacy. While we have a rather informal organizational structure, we gather to grow in faith and live our faith through ministry and action. There’s a place for all women at Living Water in the mission and ministries of Women of the ELCA. The leaders of our Women of the ELCA are Cindy Ophaug and Lynda Cales. Myrna Ulland, as churchwide president of the executive board of Women of the ELCA, continues to provide support as well.

In 2024, we continued to incorporate the Bible study from Gather magazine into the Tuesday Women’s Study weekly rotation. A 25% portion of our LWLCW offerings is routinely directed on to our Grand Canyon Synod women’s organization to support the work of our broader women’s organization. In October, several of us attended the biennial retreat of the Grand Canyon

Women in Tucson.

We routinely share information about the free monthly online magazine, Café, from Women of the ELCA, designed for women in their 20’s and 30’s but used by women of all ages. Any woman can receive Café by signing up at [www.boldcafe.org](http://www.boldcafe.org). In November, women from Living Water again supported an annual Thankoffering with a generous gift of more than \$500 in response to the blessings we’ve enjoyed. This offering supports ministries of Women of the ELCA across our entire churchwide organization.

We continue to be alert to new opportunities to engage and support women of all ages in their faith journey.

**MEN’S BREAKFAST BIBLE STUDY – Pastor Mark Rossman**

The Men’s Breakfast Bible Study meets at 8:00 AM on Thursday of each week at Spirit in the Desert. Each meeting averages 15+ attendees focused on reflecting and studying the lessons for the upcoming Sunday. This gathering has been blessed with the presence of men from other congregations actively participating in the discussion.

In December, the men again helped make Christmas special for seniors from Scottsdale’s Via Linda Senior Center adopt-a-senior holiday program with a generous financial contribution.

**SUNDAY MORNING ADULT FORUM**

The Sunday morning Adult Forum once again resumed on a bi-monthly schedule beginning in September, with presentations from retired ELCA pastor, Rev. Dr. Dennis Nelson, Rev. Bob Hutson and other invited guests.

## TUESDAY WOMEN'S STUDY—Myrna Ulland

The Tuesday Women's Study continues in a weekly morning meeting format. We have a committed group of women attending, with participation varying from 12-16+ each week. The study topics vary, from video based series to book study to the periodic Bible study from Gather magazine. Tuesday Women's Study is open to all women, members and non-members, and prior experience with Bible study is not required. Come and learn with us! We grow in our knowledge of scripture and in friendship and support with the depth of the prayers and conversation that occur each week. In 2024 we began the year with a six-session study called The Rock, The Road and The Rabbi., with material from Kathi Lee Gifford and Rabbi Jason. In March and April during Lent we did a study on Sumud, using material from the ELCA. This study focused on the Palestinian issue in the Holy Land. April and May focused on the book of James, with material from Margaret Feinberg. Resuming again in October, we did a 3-session Gather magazine study written by now Bishop Meghan Aelabouni, "After Certainty." On October 29, we began a deep dive into the Gospel of Matthew, using material from New Testament Scholar, N.T. Wright. That study takes us well into 2025.

In addition to studying together, we continue to encourage support of various local and global ministries through our weekly offerings. This year we supported the Navajo Lutheran Mission, Peter's Hope, Foothills Food Bank, St. Mary's Food Bank, and the Jerusalem missionaries through ELCA. We also made a special gift to Katie's Fund through Women of the ELCA. In December, we again helped make Christmas special for six adult women from Scottsdale's Grant Reef Senior Center

"adopt-a-senior" holiday program. These gifts are in addition to the 25% we routinely direct to the Grand Canyon Synod's women's organization. Finally, the Tuesday Women's Bible study is the core prayer group for Living Water. We regularly lift up the prayers offered during the

weekly worship service as well as those brought forward by our women when we meet together. It's a joy to be among the Tuesday Women who so lovingly share their wisdom, their laughter, their tears, and their hearts with one another as we learn together.

## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (VBS) – Kris Crow

Our 2024 VBS program, entitled "Hometown Nazareth - Where Jesus was a Kid", was held the week of Jun 17. With over 45 youth and adult volunteers and 29 children from our church and community, we spent a week in Nazareth and explored the early life of Jesus through great music, meaningful Bible stories, fun and games, awesome crafts and a delicious take-home snack. Registration was free and each child and volunteer received a one-of-a-kind t-shirt.

Our daily Bible Points illustrated just how much the life of Jesus is similar to ours and helped us to relate to him as a person.

Monday - **Jesus had a family...we do too!**

Tuesday - **Jesus had a name...we do too!**

Wednesday - **Jesus had a home...we do too!**

Thursday - **Jesus went to church...we do too!**

Friday - **Jesus served others... we do too!**

The week ended with our annual VBS Festival featuring a BBQ lunch for our VBS families and volunteers and fun in the sun on a giant water slide in the courtyard. Our annual VBS book drive resulted in 3416 books donated to the Assistance League of Phoenix for distribution to children living in poverty.

The program was guided by a Leadership Team of Pastor Shari, Heidi Ruff, Myrna Ulland, Julie Ann Walker and Kris Crow. The generous contributions made by our congregation virtually funded the entire week!



**FELLOWSHIP MISSION GROUP – Ellen Schoenbeck**

The Fellowship Program’s objective is to strengthen fellowship among congregation members, spiritually and socially, and to integrate new members into the life of the congregation. Fellowship Program teams focus on providing a range of fellowship opportunities - both large scale fellowship events and smaller groups of people with a common interest or purpose who meet on a regular basis. These teams work to create a welcoming and hospitable atmosphere for visitors and members alike on Sunday mornings and other occasions.

Members of the congregation are encouraged to become involved in ongoing efforts to expand Living Water’s Fellowship Program. The creation of new endeavors is always an option, if volunteers wish to step forward and organize activities that will enhance fellowship within the Living Water community. Hard working ministry teams spearheaded efforts to offer a variety of fellowship opportunities in 2024.

Descriptions of their activities appear below.

**CAMPUS CREW – Ron Ophaug**

Campus Crew was started in the fall of 2018. The purpose of this group is to take on small projects around the Living Water campus. Plans are to try to focus on one

project a month. Light maintenance projects will be done, as needed. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex and anyone interested in helping out is most welcome.

**FRIDAY MORNING CLUB – Julie Ann Walker**

The Friday Morning Club’s responsibility is to be helping hands to the Living Water Office Staff. Duties include:

- Take care of changing the monthly table décor in the Fellowship Hall
- Watch to make sure the kitchen is organized and tidy
- Assist with special decorations
- Help with Christmas projects, including Christmas Eve candles
- Other duties as needed
- FMC enjoys conversation and devotions on the first Friday of each month.

**GREAT GATHERINGS – Marty Lindert and Linda Hoenig**

The purpose of Great Gatherings is to provide a venue for members and guests of Living Water to join in a large group fellowship. The Great Gatherings Team coordinated three separate events during 2024. In the Spring, we visited the Musical Instrument Museum, hosting around 40 people. In October, we hosted the Reformation Potluck in our Fellowship Hall for around 75 people. And, in Mid-December we hosted the Annual Advent Dinner at Spirit in the Desert for 47 people.

There are plans for the following in 2025:

- Due to various other events, Great Gatherings will not have a Spring Event
- Reformation Potluck on October 26, 2025
- Advent Dinner on December 13, 2025.

Starting with the new year, we have a change in Leadership. Diane Klumpp will take over as Committee Chairperson from Marty Lindert.

Lynda Breault will work with Diane as Co-Chair, taking over from Linda Hoenig. Both Marty and Linda Hoenig will remain on the team.

### **LEFSE MAKING – Bob and Myrna Ulland**

Lefse is often called a Norwegian tortilla, and this holiday tradition is enjoyed by all who participate. The goal is to have some fun together while we provide an opportunity to those interested in lefse to roll and fry pre-made dough. No experience required!

In 2024, we again gathered at Joan Sprinkle's kitchen with the Ullands coordinating two afternoon sessions. Thank you to Joan for her gracious hospitality and to Lynda Cales for letting us borrow her lefse-making equipment. A perfect time to enjoy this tradition together while enjoying the fellowship of our Living Water lefse lovers!

### **LIVING ART – Leila Burrus**

The purpose of Living Art is to glorify God's creation via art appreciation and art creation. By working together, we gain inspiration and build a caring community of artistic believers. Beginning artists welcomed.

Events Include: Dinner and Art Walk; Painting events, visit Art Museums; Art shows; and painting or crafts get togethers.

### **SAINTS & SINNERS – Lee and Sue Stenehjem; Wayne and Leila Burrus**

The purpose of Saints & Sinners Small Group Fellowship is to build a stronger and more vital church body by establishing and nurturing camaraderie among church members and visitors.

This is accomplished by organizing participants into small groups of twelve to

fifteen and having the leader of each small group organize a function or get together. These small group activities are held in the months of February and March. In 2024 there were 93 participants consisting of 37 couples and 19 singles.

### **SPLENDID TABLE – Kristi Winter**

Kristi Winter In 2024 we continued to coordinate meals for fellowship that included: New Member Dinners, Dennis Nelson's Ordination Celebration, a Synod Spring Gathering, Hospitality for an ELCA Consortium event, a celebration party for VBS and the Thanksgiving Pie Service. We enjoyed providing these special gathering events for our congregation and guests and look forward to more opportunities in the coming year.

### **SUNDAY MORNING HOSPITALITY – Carol Gasser and Pam Landon**

This ministry team coordinates refreshments on Sunday mornings to provide fellowship opportunities for members and visitors. Refreshments, consisting of donuts and other treats, plus coffee and juice are served after the 10 AM service. This team also arranges the cakes and cookies to celebrate Confirmation, Graduation and other special occasions. Volunteers from the congregation who are willing to serve on a monthly, quarterly or occasional basis ALL ARE WELCOME!



### **WITNESS MISSION GROUP**

Our witness team is comprised of the following functions: Evangelism, Marketing, Serving our Community, Outreach, Advertising, and Sharing the Gospel. These are all descriptors that relate to supporting LWLC's Purpose Statement... "To Be and Make Disciples of Jesus Christ."

#### **NEW MEMBER CLASS – Pastor Mark Rossman**

This past year there were two New Member Informational Sessions. These sessions gave the participants a chance to get to know one another a bit better, learn more about Living Water and its history, and discover how each might fit into the ministry work which is done here. After taking the time to share life and faith experiences with one another, the groups took a look into gaining a greater understanding of what spiritual gifts each might hold within their lives. From there we discussed how those gifts might be used to best serve God as a member of Living Water. Each session then closed with a wonderful meal, provided by the Splendid Table Team, with the leadership of the congregation, affording us the time to get to know one another on a deeper level.

#### **PACE (Pro-Active Community Engagement)**

**Members: Sue Umland James Bernau, Jeff Munck, Debbie Anderson, Lisa Moehn, Jill Wehr and Sue Stenehjem. Dave and Liz Gilkey resigned their membership; we thank them for their many years of service.**

Ministry Team Purpose: The goal of PACE is to sponsor events that bring Living

Water members and community members to the church for learning opportunities and entertainment.

#### **2024 Events:**

PACE welcomed the Red Cross to Living Water for a blood drive in June. The number of participants and the pints donated surpassed our goal leading to another blood drive in October. Again, Living Water donors and community donors helped us exceed our goal. PACE has determined to continue hosting a blood drive at Living Water in four-month intervals.

On Saturday, November 2, PACE sponsored an event entitled "Aging and Transitioning" presented by Mari Murrin, Concierge Placement Consultant at Senior Care Arizona. Mari outlined choices that seniors have in choosing options for care, the costs of different kinds of care, and the help Medicare provides for meeting the costs. After opening the presentation up to questions, Mari addressed misconceptions about care and costs, and she gave advice on necessary legal documents.

We look forward to continuing to provide programs in 2025!

#### **PRINT & ONLINE PUBLICATIONS –**

##### **Jennifer Kelsh**

Group meetings continue to have the option to join via Zoom, in order to ensure all who would like to attend are able.

Our two primary newsletters are available in print format and posted on the website so that members can stay connected with events, ministry focuses and worthy community programs.

**Connections** is our weekly newsletter and **Splash!** is published monthly. Having these resources always available facilitated members



navigating continually adapting ministries and concerns (even for snowbirds).

Blast emails were also utilized to make sure all members were aware of the posting of bible study recordings, Zoom meetings, bible study notes, events, and congregational updates.

Additionally, implementation of a new Education Building Security system has been established and new codes created for renters as their meetings occur.



**WORSHIP AND MUSIC MISSION GROUP**  
**MUSIC MINISTRY/ADULT CHOIR/  
 PRAISE BAND – Christina Hall**

This past year has been one of great service and continuing to praise God through our music ministry. We are so thankful for the choir and band members who enhance the worship service each Sunday. The hymns, contemporary songs, and choir anthems are always based on the theme and readings of the week. We started three “Ya’ll Come Sing” summer choir Sundays which went very well. We formally established a contemporary version of the Psalm readings for each liturgical Sunday service. The annual Christmas Cantata included over 50 musicians, including four children this year! What a blessing to have all involved in making the Christmas season extra special.

**ADULT CHOIR/PRAISE BAND – Christina Hall  
 and Scott Sims**

**PRAISE BAND – Scott Sims, Christina Hall,  
 Dave Dugwyler, Dan Wiebe, Bradley**

**Wallace, Marcie Donavon, Jennifer Dorsch,  
 Frances DeBruyn**

**ALTAR GUILD – Sharon Westergreen**

This committee sets the altar for Holy Communion by lighting the candles and preparing the bread and wine for the pastors and the congregation. Our duties also include cleaning up the altar after church, cleaning the plates and wine goblets, putting water in the baptismal font, taking the offerings and donations from the hunger jar to the safe in the office, maintaining the care of the linens, and ordering supplies as needed.

Our current members are Sharon Westergreen, Sheila Fankhauser, Janis Fjeld, Ellen Schoenbeck, Sue Boyd, Erika Diaz and Lynda Breault.

**LITURGICAL ARTS – Sue Stenehjem**

Our mission statement is to enhance the environment of the church campus with visual arts to help congregants glorify God through their worship experiences and to educate parishioners about the meanings of liturgical colors, symbols and seasons.

The official “Church Calendar” has a 3-year rotation that is identified as year A, year B, and year C. The church year for 2024 is in year **B**. The liturgical seasons and the exact dates are identified by this “Church Calendar”.

The church year begins with Advent which is typically soon after Thanksgiving and goes for 12 months until the next Advent. There are six (6) liturgical seasons or festivals throughout the year.

The order in which the seasons occur and the assigned liturgical colors for each are as follows:

- 1) Advent - Blue
- 2) Christmas - White and Gold
- 3) Epiphany - Green
- 4) Lent - Purple

- 5) Easter - White and Gold
- 6) Pentecost - Green

In addition to the six (6) seasons there are five (5) separate Sundays where white drapes and banners are used for just that one Sunday. They are as follows:

- 1) Baptism of our Lord
- 2) Transfiguration of Our Lord
- 3) The Holy Trinity
- 4) All Saints Sunday
- 5) Christ the King.

The Day of Pentecost and Reformation Sunday are the only two (2) Sundays where the liturgical color is red.

Our committee is blessed to have such a dedicated, creative team of people who truly enjoy making our sanctuary a beautiful place to worship. This year's team includes Lynda Breault, Leila and Wayne Burrus, Lynda Cales, Linda Hoening, Diane Klumpp, Marty and Gordon Lindert, Terry Nelson, Sue Stenehjem and Sharon Westergreen.

As we say at our Liturgical Arts meetings, "It takes a village"!! Our sincere thanks to such a talented, visionary, enthusiastic team.

If you are interested in participating on our team please contact Sue Stenehjem or Terry Nelson.

Respectfully Submitted, Sue Stenehjem

### **SERVANT TEAMS-**

#### **Darnell & Donna Pettengill**

Servant Teams fill a valuable role at Living Water. They serve, lead, and oversee the many duties before, during and after our Sunday and special worship services. We seek to involve our year around worshipers, new members and snowbirds.

We have 4-6 servant team leaders assigned to each Sunday of the month. Greeting, ushering

and assisting with communion are the principal responsibilities of our servant teams. Added responsibilities occur for baptisms, reception of new members and the celebrations of Thanksgiving, Christmas, Lent and Easter. Each servant team member is trained, insightful and capable in assisting with emergencies as well as routine functions.

Our servant team members for 2024 were: Debbie Anderson, Mark Anderson, Roz Anderson, Charlie Boyd, Sue Boyd, Lynda Breault, Rich Cote, Erika Diaz, Denny Dumler, Bob Frost, Jim King, Diane Klumpp, Gordon Lindert, Marty Lindert, Lisa Moehn, John Nerison, Judy Nerison, Cindy Ophaug, Ron Ophaug, Jeri Pounds, Phil Pounds, Bev Rogge, Darrell Shipley, Ed Shipley, Lee Stenehjem, Sue Stenehjem, Steve Umland, Sue Umland and Sharon Westergreen.

Thanks to all for their service!

Respectfully Submitted,  
Darnell & Donna Pettengill

### **SPECIAL SERVICES –Frances DeBruyn**

The Special Services Ministry facilitates three Church Services: Baptisms, Marriages, and Funerals/ Memorials. Each child being baptized receives a handcrafted Faith Chest with instructions for use as the child grows, a handmade baby blanket or cross (depending on the age of the child), a book, a candle, and certificates for both the child and the sponsors. We are deeply grateful to Jay Lucas for making the beautiful Faith Chests, and to the Prayer Shawl Ministry for their lovely baby blankets. For weddings, we help the family gain access to the church and make sure they adhere to regulations (like no confetti) set out in the Wedding Pamphlet prepared by Pastor Mark. Funerals are in many ways our most challenging and also rewarding mission. The goal of the Special Services Ministry is to

relieve the family of some of the planning burden while helping at the services and providing light refreshments to full luncheons afterward (if desired) to encourage the community that has gathered to engage in fellowship. We are blessed that so many members of Living Water Lutheran Church contribute generously of their time and talents to make these events a blessing to the families.

Frances DeBruyn



**GIVING MISSION GROUP**

**STEWARDSHIP – PASTOR MARK ROSSMAN**

Results of the Stewardship Drive for 2025 pledges indicate a substantial increase over the 2024 drive. The amount pledged for 2025 increased by 15.6%. In addition, the number of pledges submitted for 2025 increased by 10.7% over pledges received last year. The pledge amount, which exceeded \$650,000 - the largest amount pledged in the history of Living Water - is being incorporated into the LWLC budgeting process for 2025.

## 2024 Meeting Minutes

### Living Water Lutheran Church

Annual Meeting February 11, 2024

**Call to order** by Church Council President Darnell Pettengill at 11:05am.

**Approval of Minutes from Annual Meeting 2023**

**A MOTION was made, was seconded, and was carried to approve the annual meeting minutes from February 12, 2023.**

**Acknowledgement of Retiring Council Members**

**Darnell Pettengill thanked Don Pick for his term as Vice President and Debbie Anderson for her term as Secretary and Member-at-large.**

**Introduction and Election of New Church Council Members**

**New and returning Church Council members' biographies** were available in print for review by the congregation.

Sue Boyd – Vice President for a two-year term

James King – Member-at-large for a two-year term

Lisa Moehn – Secretary for a two-year term

**A MOTION** was made, was seconded, and was carried to approve the slate of candidates as submitted. Voting for Church Council members proceeded by written ballot. The slate of candidates was unanimously approved by the congregation with a count of 60 ballots.

Pastor Mark's Report (Pastor Mark's full report is online.)

- Pastor Mark underscored the message from his report that Living Water is a congregation that gives so much to all of us.
- He stressed that love, kindness, and participation is huge in this church, and it is a blessing to have us all as a part of Living Water's ministries.

Pastor Shari's Report (Pastor Shari's full report is online.)

- Pastor Shari commented that she had recently filled out a report for the bishop, and she noted one of the questions: "What brings you joy?" Pastor Shari's answer emphasized her love for connecting people to opportunities to service that give the individual meaning and purpose. She offered a "Big Thanks" to all who said "Yes" because ministry is "team sport."
- The Church Council works well together and is "active and caring."
- Although we don't always see youth on Sunday morning, there are twelve youth consistently involved in Confirmation and six children in Family

Sunday School. Six youth are signed up for the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans this summer. Highlights:

- The Volunteer Lunch was a “joy” and will be repeated. A suggestion was made during the luncheon to restart the Eucharistic Ministry.
- The Healing Service was “meaningful” and elicited positive feedback; it will be repeated.

### Treasurer’s Report

- Treasurer Steve Umland walked the congregation through the budget for 2024.
- The budget for 2024 totals \$904,226.

### Treasurer’s Comments:

- Revenues are hard to predict. We have budgeted 100% of pledged offerings for 2024.
- Non-pledged offerings continue to grow.
- The budget amounts for 2024 reflect an assumption of an inflation rate of 3%. The majority of expenses are fixed: personnel, mortgage, synod obligation, and Spirit in the Desert support. It is hard to predict what Living Water might need to maintain the facilities.
- This is a deficit budget by \$9,080.

### Questions:

- The former “building fund” was absorbed into the general fund. Why are they still separated?

**Answer:** Some people still designate money for the mortgage fund. Listing that separately is a way to keep track.

- What is the logic of limiting our benevolence to only pledged funds and not including non-pledged funds? Those providing non-pledged funds are not contributing to places we feel are important.

**Answer:** Many people are in disagreement with policies of the ELCA and prefer that their contributions do not support those policies. We have to consider that if Living Water gave 10% of ALL contributions to the ELCA, would some people stop giving altogether or would they choose to leave Living Water?

- How much of non-pledged offerings are represented by that philosophy – a philosophy in disagreement with ELCA policies?

**Answer:** We don’t know.

**Pastor Mark:** The Church Council is continuing this policy because it has been in place since I (Pastor Mark) came to Living Water. The present leadership is not responsible for creating the policy; this is just the way it has been for at least the last ten years.

**Treasurer:** Please note that when Living Water was undergoing its financial difficulties due to the embezzlement, and suspended its payments to the synod, the synod was very understanding and did not contact Living Water for missed payments.

- How is the Praise Band paid and how much does the Praise Band cost Living Water?

**Answer:** The Praise Band is paid on the basis of time sheets the musicians submit. It is difficult to give a precise figure without looking at it carefully, but it is about \$13-15,000/year and is billed as a Personnel Expense. Costs for music and supplies come out of the Worship & Music fund and increase the yearly cost for the band to about \$20,000.

A **MOTION** to approve the 2024 Financial Ministry Plan as submitted was made, **was seconded, and was carried.**

**Old Business**

**None**

**New Business**

A MOTION was made, was seconded, and was carried to allow the Church Council to staff the following teams: Synodical Assembly Delegates, Mission Endowment Fund of Living Water Lutheran Church, Audit Team.

**Meeting Adjourned at 11:43am by Church Council President Darnell Pettengill  
Minutes submitted by outgoing Secretary Debbie Anderson**

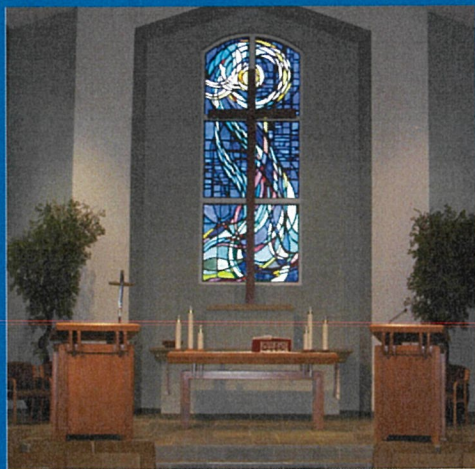
## 2025 Annual Meeting Agenda

### Living Water Lutheran Church Annual Meeting—11:00 AM, February 9, 2025 AGENDA

1. Call the Meeting to Order
2. Opening Prayer—Pastor Shari
2. Call for Quorum
3. Adopt Minutes of the 2024 LW LC Annual Meeting
4. Election of Congregation Council
5. Pastor Mark Rossman's Report
6. Pastor Shari Bernau's Report
7. Darnell Pettengill President's Report
8. Steve Umland Treasurer's Report & Adoption of 2025 Budget
9. Audit Committee Report
10. Approval of LW Endowment Fund Committee
11. New Business
12. Closing Prayer—Pastor Mark
12. Adjorn

Thank you,  
Darnell Pettengill

*Jesus says, "Whoever drinks the water I give them, will never thirst." - John 4:14*



*Living Water Lutheran Church is a warm, vibrant, young, energetic, welcoming, missional community of faith in the Pinnacle Peak area of north Scottsdale. Situated in the beautiful Sonoran Desert in the shadow of Pinnacle Peak, we are gathered and sent people grateful for God's grace and excited about sharing the good news of Jesus Christ by our worship, words and deeds.*



*We are life-long Lutherans and people brand new to faith. We are children, youth, young adults, families, empty nesters, young retirees, seniors and saints of all age. We are native Arizonans and transplants from all across the country. WE are those who prefer a more traditional but still creative form of worship featuring hymns and liturgy, and those who worship best in a more casual setting with praise music and a band. We serve our neighbors near and far in a variety of ways.*

*We love to get fellowship and have fun. We are growing in our faith and in our knowledge of God's word. We are God's people in this place, joyfully worshiping, gratefully serving, generously sharing and warmly inviting our neighbors to join us.*

*Living Water is a member congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).*

*We love to get together and have fun. We are growing in our faith and in our knowledge of God's word. We are God's people in this place, joyfully worshiping, gratefully serving, generously sharing and warmly inviting our neighbors to join us.*

Living Water is a member congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

**OUR MISSION STATEMENT:**  
*"To Be and to Make Disciples  
of Jesus Christ."*



**OUR VISION STATEMENT:**

*To create a community which Welcomes all people;  
Shares the experience of God's grace; Grows in faith;  
and is Sent out into the world to care.*



[www.LWLCAZ.org](http://www.LWLCAZ.org)