

Dec 2017/Jan 2018

Paradise Valley United Methodist Church

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## Coming Home to Jesus this Christmas

Jesus was born in a manger in Bethlehem, a town far away from his family's home. Yet, with his mother, Joseph and God close by, he must have felt loved, no matter where he laid his head. At Christmastime, we long for home, a place where we may find acceptance, grace and hope. During Advent, we'll explore what "Coming Home" means and we'll celebrate Jesus' birth **Sunday, December 24, Christmas Eve**. Read more on page 2.



## Open Table Ministry Grows at PVUMC

Michael, pictured at left with Rev. Brenda Smith and her daughter, Rachel, is one of Open Table's success stories. Michael learned how to navigate life by being in relationship with a group of adults from PVUMC. They mentored him for a year and gave him hope of a better life. PVUMC has committed to several tables for young adults in 2018, and needs other adults to serve alongside them, providing guidance, support and friendship as they move toward independence. Rev. Brenda says, "Open Table truly follows Jesus' example. It's about building relationships with those we serve as well as supporting someone in poverty to help them reach independence." Visit [pvumc.org/news](http://pvumc.org/news) to read more.



Paradise Valley United Methodist Church

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## Desert Scroll Deadline

Have a story to share? The copy deadline is the 10th of the preceding month.

Pam R. Selthun, Editor

[info@pvumc.org](mailto:info@pvumc.org)



## Christmas Eve at PVUMC

Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year, and PVUMC offers a service of Nine Lessons and Carols at 9:30 am, followed by a family service at 3 pm and three traditional Candlelight Christmas Eve services at 5, 7 and 9 pm. Senior Pastor Dave Summers preaches at all services on *The Christmas Story*.

The 3 pm service is for those with evening plans, those who don't want to drive at night and for families with small children. Worship includes a Blessing of the Babies.

The Candlelight services at 5, 7 and 9 pm feature the youth choir at 7 pm along with adult choirs, bells, strings, piano, and organ at all services. Childcare is available for all services except for 9 pm.

The church campus is closed **Christmas Day** through **December 30**.



## Find Us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

PVUMC has several active social media channels for you to follow and engage with others. Find us on Twitter @PVUMC, Instagram @pvumc and like us on Facebook at *ParadiseValleyUMC*, *ParadisePerk*, *PVUMC.Serendipities* and *pvumcpreschool*. We also have private or public Facebook groups for Young Adults, Youth Ministries, Church and Society, Chancel Choir, MOPS and Modern Family. Sharing is caring, so please share our posts with your family and friends.





### Christmas Concert: *Gloria!*

On **Sunday, December 10**, you are invited to the 6 pm PVUMC Christmas Concert: *Gloria!* Part of the Community Concert Series, the event features the Chancel Choir singing Randol Alan Bass' "Gloria," accompanied by The Warehouse Brass. This event weaves music, poetic texts and audience sing-a-longs for an uplifting evening. A dessert reception follows in the Fellowship Center.

### Phoenix Girls Chorus Concert

We welcome the Bella and Cantabile Choirs of the Phoenix Girls Chorus **Friday, January 12**, at 7 pm as part of the Community Concert Series. The group has a wide musical repertoire including classical, sacred, folk, Broadway and more. Register on Eventbrite at [pvumc-concerts.eventbrite.com](http://pvumc-concerts.eventbrite.com). No tickets needed, but donations gratefully accepted at this concert and all the concerts in the PVUMC Community Concert Series.

### Piano Concert January 26

PVUMC is pleased to present Young Concert Artist Pianist Tomer Gewirtzman in a ticketed concert on **Friday, January 26** at 7 pm in the sanctuary. Adult and student ticket prices available. Visit [pvumc.org/concerts](http://pvumc.org/concerts) for info.



### Birthday Party for Jesus

On **Sunday, December 17**, children are invited to celebrate Jesus' birthday in their 9:30 am Sunday classes. Children may bring gifts to donate to babies at UMOM in honor of the baby Jesus. Diapers, wipes, bibs or bottles are especially needed. The celebration will include a special treat, party favors, a craft to take home and a chance to sing Happy Birthday to Jesus.

### Family Worship on Holidays

On Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, we worship at 9:30 am but there are no children's classes. Praise Packs will be available.

## Wise Men Visit, January 7

Don't miss a visit from the Magi on **Epiphany Sunday, January 7, 2018**. Children at Sunday School will have a chance to talk to the visitors, and receive their special gifts.



## Caring Kids on Sundays

Caring Kids is a service-oriented class for children in 1st-6th grade. The group meets in H1 at 11 am on most Sundays at the same time as Modern Family, a parent group, meets in H5. During Change the World Day, the Caring Kids and others sorted donated items for their spring Rummage Sale, **March 3-4, 2018**. They will be collecting children's items again in January and February. Questions? Email [Bethany\\_Taylor@hotmail.com](mailto:Bethany_Taylor@hotmail.com) or Rev. Brenda Smith, [brenda@pvumc.org](mailto:brenda@pvumc.org).

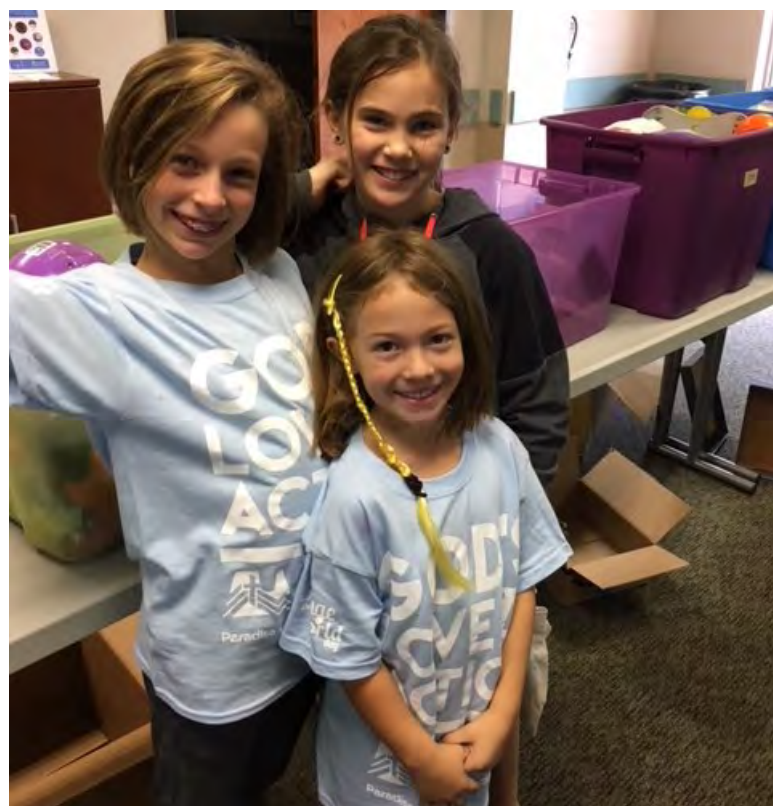


## Winter Wonderland Event

The Fellowship Team invites you to visit with Santa and his elves on **Friday, December 15**. Join the elves at 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Center, take photos with Santa and make a holiday craft while you enjoy free pizza and hot cocoa. At 7 pm, snuggle down into your blankets and pillows to watch the family movie, *Elf*, a Christmas comedy featuring Will Farrell. Pajamas welcome!

## Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser

Mark your calendar to attend our annual Pancake Breakfast on **January 21, 2018**, 9-11:30 am in the Fellowship Center. Under the supervision of Debby and Bill Kidwell, our third and fourth graders, also known as Thrive 34, are spearheading this fundraiser to buy a new church van. All-you-can-eat pancakes, with sides of coffee, juice and sausage are just \$5 (suggested donation).



*The Caring Kids joined Change the World Day on November 12, 2017. They sorted and organized their Rummage Sale donations — 20 boxes in all!*



## Scholarships for Camp Mingus

This Christmas, we invite you to give the gift of camping to a child or youth who cannot afford a week of summer camp at Mingus Mountain Camp and Retreat Center. For children and youth who have never been out of the city before, the cool mountain air and fresh breezes are priceless. The cost to you is \$350 per camper. Thank you for donating via check or online to PVUMC. Include "Mingus Scholarships" in the memo line or comments section.



## Snow in the Desert

After the holidays, winter truly arrives at the PVUMC Preschool, when children have the chance to experience the wonder of snow in the desert. On **January 11 and 12, 2018** the snow machine arrives in the back parking lot, and Spirit Days become Snow Days.

## PVUMC Preschool Celebrations

All the preschool classes perform in the Christmas Musical Celebrations, **December 20 and 21** at 9:15 am in the sanctuary, to the delight of the students' parents, aunts, uncles and grandparents. Everyone is invited to join the Preschool for these performances.



## Open House

On **January 17 and 18, 2018**, the PVUMC Preschool hosts Open Houses and an opportunity for families to learn more about the preschool and the

registration process for 2018-2019. To take a tour, call, stop by or email Mindy Sobraske: 602.840.8265 or [msobraske@pvumc.org](mailto:msobraske@pvumc.org).



## Save the Date: April 26, 2018

You're invited to sponsor the 32nd Annual Ice Cream Social Fundraiser and Children's Art Show at the \$250, \$500 and \$1,000 levels. The Preschool Board is also seeking silent auction donations. Please contact Kristin Maller, [Kristin.Maller@gmail.com](mailto:Kristin.Maller@gmail.com) or 480.249.9494 for further details.



## Change the World Day

On **Sunday, November 12**, we worked together to change the world. We had approximately 300 people involved in service projects on and off campus.

## Projects On and Off Campus

Change the World Day always brings our church family together. This year, we began with breakfast burritos and fellowship on the patio before heading to the sanctuary for a short service of blessing. Those who served off campus at pet shelters, like Forever Loved Pet Sanctuary, bonded over their love of animals. Others put their hands to work cleaning up the outdoor spaces on the church campus or at places like Hospice of the Valley.



## God's Love in Action at PVUMC

Family project volunteers on campus made 400 care bags for the homeless; preschoolers and their families made 25 Praise Packs; 220 Advent gifts were prepared for the Preschool and Children's Ministry, and 300 candles were cleaned for Christmas Eve. Thirty ornament crafts and 100 hand-written cards were delivered to the police, veterans or the homebound.



## Snack and Pack Helps UMOM and UMCOR

The Snack and Pack project grew this year to include UMCOR disaster relief kits as well as Thanksgiving meals for UMOM New Day Centers. Both projects were organized by Colleen Lomax and Sam Rankin, who engaged 125 people to help pack 220 Thanksgiving meals for those experiencing homelessness. They also assembled 236 UMCOR hygiene kits for victims of recent disasters like Hurricane Harvey. Thank you for being God's love in action!





## RAFT

RAFT—Refugee Assistance and Friendship Teams — recently cosponsored a new refugee family from the Congo in cooperation with Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest.

### RAFT Welcomes New Family

On November 16, members of PVUMC RAFT (Refugee Assistance and Friendship Teams) RAFT welcomed another refugee family to America. The Congolese family of eight moved into an apartment furnished by RAFT and a core team will help them as they adjust to life in the states after spending 20 years in refugee camps. The family needs several items as well as Christmas gifts, especially clothing. If you can help, or would like to join the core team to help with transportation, acculturation and more, please email Keith Sobraske, [ksobraske@thinkiri.com](mailto:ksobraske@thinkiri.com) or Karen Ouzts, [karenouzts@gmail.com](mailto:karenouzts@gmail.com). Read more at: <https://pvumc.org/2017/11/22/raft-welcomes-new-refugee-family-to-phoenix/>.

RAFT continues to look for ways to help refugees and promote friendship between our church family and their families. At this writing, RAFT members Marcia and Jack Heller were planning to host a Syrian Supper Club to help our first refugee family, the Radwans.



### Provide Shelter for Homeless

Sundays in December prior to Christmas Eve, you're invited to purchase [UMOM Holiday Tribute Cards](#) on the patio. The cards come in different monetary increments, with \$15 cards providing 1 night of shelter, \$50 providing 1 day of food, shelter and childcare for a child, \$100 providing 1 week of shelter for an individual, and \$360 providing 1 month of shelter for someone in need. Cards may also be purchased at the church office during the week.



### Serendipities Shop N Share

Barbara Bush and Meg Wolfe serve PVUMC as Serendipities' volunteer managers. On **November 29** and **December 6**, they will open the gift shop for Shop N Share, which raises money for local missions. From 9 am until 7 pm, profits from the purchases you make will be donated to four designated local missions: Audrey's Angels, Mingus Camp scholarships, The Wesley Community Center and UMOM New Day Centers.

## Young Adults Mission Trip

Mark your calendar to register for the YAL UMC house-building mission trip to Rocky Point, Mexico, **Feb 16-19, 2018**. The last day to sign up is **Jan 28**. Email [brenda@pvumc.org](mailto:brenda@pvumc.org) for all YAL events.



## Cookie Walk Benefits Youth Music Programs, December 17

Every year, the church hosts a Cookie Walk to raise money for a particular group. Youth who are in choir or handbells are hosting again to raise money for their annual music tour. If you would like to help, or bake cookies, please email Ashley Snavley Strawser, music and arts director, [ashley@pvumc.org](mailto:ashley@pvumc.org).

## Paradise Perk



The Paradise Perk is PVUMC's volunteer-run, on-site, full-service coffee shop managed by Shannon Curkendoll and her hard-

working family. In the past five years, the Perk has raised almost \$45,000 for youth missions, and wants to do more. Originally opened in 2008, the Perk is in need of an update, including new equipment and repairs. Dedicated supporters are working to make improvements, and donations toward the upgrades are welcome. An anonymous donor has already contributed \$4,000 toward the estimated \$11,000 price tag.

Everyone who works at the Perk is a volunteer and loves serving our community. The Perk offers a wide variety of coffee, tea and smoothies, in all your favorite holiday flavors. Try a Peppermint Mocha Frappuccino, a Caramel latte or the Cinnamon Streusel flavored coffee next time you come by on a Sunday, 9 am-1 pm. Thanks for your support.

## Participate in a Mission Trip

Last summer, PVUMC Senior High Youth went on a mission trip to San Francisco, CA, where they worked with Pelican Ministries to minister to the homeless on the streets of Oakland, CA. This summer, the youth are going to Houston, Texas to assist with hurricane relief efforts around the city. To strengthen our ministry efforts as a church, Youth Ministries Director Christopher Wurpts has opened up the trip to adult members of the congregation to participate. You're invited to join the youth in a week-long mission project which will include removal and replacement of drywall in residential areas, along with some light construction work. The dates of the trip are **July 22-27, 2018**. Cost is \$1,200 per person and includes all travel costs, lodging, etc. Email [Christopher@pvumc.org](mailto:Christopher@pvumc.org) or call Chris at 712.348.3791 if you are interested in joining the intergenerational group.





## Online Daily Devotions During Advent

You're invited to subscribe to PVUMC's daily devotions during Advent, and if you have a Christmas story to share, we'd love to publish it on the Advent blog on the PVUMC website. Receive daily stories written by members, staff and clergy, as well as inspirational poems and videos through Christmas Day. The [2017 Advent blog](#) is at <http://pvumc.org>. If you have previously subscribed to the blog, you should receive emails automatically on **December 1**.



## Prayer Shawl Ministry

With the fast pace of life, the prayer shawl/blanket ministry is a way to connect with God, be intentional about praying for someone in your life or in the church community, and slow down. The recipients of prayer shawls are surrounded by prayer and love in a tangible way. The Knit Together Journeys small group meets Wednesday mornings in the Paradise Perk, and anyone who wants to knit or crochet, or learn how to, is welcome to join the group. Please contact Cassandra Holmes at [cassandraholmes@gmail.com](mailto:cassandraholmes@gmail.com) or 541.941.3161 if you're interested in being a part of the group or this ministry.

## Enneagram Events

Register for Arizona Enneagram Association (AEA) programs by visiting their website at <http://arizonaenneagram.org/>.

## Learn How to Live with Loss

### Preparing for and Living with Losses

*"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."* - Psalm 34:18

This February, you're invited to join a weekly grief class on Wednesdays, 12 noon-1:30 pm. Facilitated by Tina Olson and Kathy-Kramer Howe, this class will help you understand how we grieve, how to prepare for loss and how to live after we lose someone special. The workshop includes strategies, information and tools to help you prepare for and survive significant losses and death in your life. Share your personal journeys of loss and grieve with others as you let the healing begin. Register by contacting the church office at 602.840.8360 or via email, Rev. Andrea Address at [andrea@pvumc.org](mailto:andrea@pvumc.org).

## Journeys Small Groups Thrive

*"My expectations have been surpassed! We laugh, share and love one another."*  
*"The group members are amazing. Their thoughts and words make me think and move me to be a better person."*

These are quotes from participants in small groups who meet at the church every week. Many positive responses like these were received as part of the recent *Journeys Small Groups* at PVUMC Questionnaire. Find out how you can study the Bible, pray together and support each other on your faith journey. Email Rev. Andrea at [andrea@pvumc.org](mailto:andrea@pvumc.org).

## Pledge to PVUMC

Making a commitment to support PVUMC helps us honor our mission to be God's love in action. Visit <https://pvumc.org/pledge/> today!



### October 2017 YTD

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>
<b>Receipts</b>	<b>\$653,848</b>	<b>\$642,457</b>
<b>Disbursements</b>	<b>609,501</b>	<b>603,097</b>
<b>Net receipts over disbursements</b>	<b>\$44,347</b>	<b>\$39,360</b>

## A Story about Generosity

by John Bowers

This is a story about generosity. The story starts with a little boy in Sunday School who placed a dime in the collection basket. His parents gave him two dimes — one for the church and one to spend or save. With a child's innocent wisdom, I understood that if I wanted to receive, I had to learn to share.

Fast Forward to a young adult who has graduated from college, served in the Navy, and now has his first real job and his own apartment. He has joined a church that is not his parents' church.... I knew I should support the church if I expected it to be there when I needed it. How much should I give? As the son of an accountant, I ran the numbers, of course. If the church sold tickets for Sunday worship, how much would they charge? I came up with a weekly cost, and that's how much I put in the plate.

As time passed, I became more active in the church, and became aware of how much more there was to the church than just worship. I noticed that the church helped people who had more problems and less resources than I.

## Finance Report

**Where Are We Now?** Through the four months of Fiscal Year 2018, October 2017 year-to-date (YTD) total receipts were higher than budget by \$11,391. YTD disbursements were under budget by \$6,404. If you have questions about the budget, or church finances, please contact Church Administrator Mickey Price, [mprice@pvumc.org](mailto:mprice@pvumc.org) or 602.840.8360, ext 113. Thank you for giving to PVUMC.

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Maybe I wasn't giving enough.

At the next pledge campaign, I increased my giving. The following year, I increased it again. A few years into this process, I noticed that even though I gave more each year than the year before, I never missed the additional money. I also found that giving felt better as I gave more. It was more fun to make a generous gift than to write a check to pay the bills.

As I became more generous, I became more aware of how generous the people around me were too. They would share with me, cry with me and pray with me. The more I gave, the less I worried about money. In a biblical sense, I became more confident in God's promise that I would always have everything I needed. We talk about giving and being active in the church because the church changes lives. When I became more generous, God changed MY life. The more I gave, the more I was blessed. Am I giving enough? God hasn't told me so yet, so I increase my giving each year. As you find ways to be more generous in your support of the church, be confident that God will provide and that *you* will be transformed.



## Saguaros Meet December 14 and January 18

Join the Saguaros on **Thursday, December 14** in the Fellowship Center for "The Gift of the 4th Wiseman," presented by Rev. Andrea Andress, followed by a potluck lunch. Menu: A-D, main dish; E-M, salads; N-Z, desserts. On **January 18**, listen to personal stories from people whose lives have been and continue to be transformed by God's grace via "Saving Amy," an organization whose mission is to empower the marginalized. A-C, desserts; D-M, main dish; N-Z, salads.



### Funeral Reception Volunteers

A list is being compiled of those who would like to volunteer to bake cookies and/or help with funeral receptions as needed. Debbie Doran has volunteered to be PVUMC's funeral reception coordinator. Contact her by phone at 480.694.3897 or email, [sirsnow1@cox.net](mailto:sirsnow1@cox.net).

### Flower Donations

You're invited to donate flowers to display in our chancel area in worship on Sundays. The flowers may be dedicated in honor or in memory of loved ones, and we'll include the dedication in the bulletin. Take the flowers home after the service, or donate them to a homebound member of the congregation. Call Ginny Andrews 602.996.4494 for details.

Christmas flowers (poinsettias) must be ordered by **December 10**. Cost: \$20.



### Our Joys...

Marriage of Steven Henglefeld and Alyssa Hinchman, September 30, 2017

Marriage of Ashley Snavley and Thomas Strawser, October 7, 2017

92nd Birthday for Gene Chaille

### Our Christian Sympathies to...

Sophie Sigtermans (children: Remy, Dane, Summer), on the death of her husband (father), Rich Sigtermans, September 13, 2017

Sandy Lozier, on the death of her husband, Garry Lozier, September 21, 2017

Kenneth Curry, on the death of his sister, Cynthia Curry, September 24, 2017

Susie Cooper, on the death of her father, Akbar Moshiri, October 2, 2017

David Hepburn, on the death of his nephew, Gill Cyester, October 2, 2017

Rolly Levine, October 11, 2017



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*Alive with the Spirit, we bring  
God's love into action by igniting  
faith, transforming lives and  
creating community.*

*Please share our good news with each member of your family.*



## **From Paradise**

**By Dr. Dave Summers, Senior Pastor**

Dear Friends,

On July 30, we held our Better Together Sunday. It was a time for us to talk to each other about what keeps us up at night. People identified 342 issues and we grouped these into themes related to our overall society (121), family and friends (77), personal issues (62), spirituality and church (48), and economics (23). Some of the societal issues included concerns about the lack of civility, politics, media, crime, healthcare, education, immigration and how our societal values have changed. Of these, the lack of civility and politics were the most prevalent.

Concerns about family and friends included relationships and support, parenting, caring for elderly family members, helping adult children, and concerns about grandchildren. Issues around the economy, employment and income came up 23 times during our discussions, with some worried about being able to provide.

We are grateful for all who shared in these intimate and thoughtful conversations. There is no better way for us to know how you feel and what you need except by sharing. It also helps us understand and feel the heart of the congregation as a whole. Your thoughts helped us create the Common Ground series this fall, which included videos, speakers and time to talk about tough issues like prejudice. The feedback also helped us plan other ministry programs and worship series for 2018. Since our Better Together Sunday, we have lifted up prayers that reflect the many concerns which were shared, and we will continue to ask for God's help, wisdom and strength as we face worries and concerns.

Christmas is a time of returning, of coming home, which can be wonderful or problematic. Many of us look forward to coming home at Christmas or to having family members join us. We yearn for acceptance, love and support. Sometimes this happens naturally. Sometimes it is absent. Mary and Joseph faced similar issues. They both lived with uncertainty about their future family plans. Mary's pregnancy may have been difficult for her family to accept; we know it was for Joseph. An angel had to set him straight! They realized, as we do, that coming home is ultimately found in God. This Advent and Christmas, you're invited to return to your spiritual home, where you're better able to face your own family tensions, unresolved issues and find hope. Since God became known in Jesus Christ, you can find grace, even when the world or your family may not accept you. With God by your side, you need not give in to despair, fear or anxiety. Find your home in the manger, where Jesus offers peace, hope, love and joy. – *Pastor Dave Summers*