



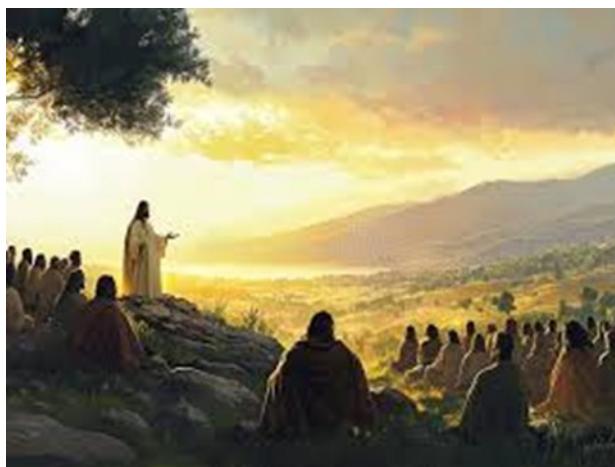
Love of Christ Lutheran Church

1525 North Power Road
Mesa AZ 85205

Fax: (480) 832-2583
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Welcome to LOC's Weekly E-News

4th Sunday of Epiphany, February 1, 2026



“Who are the Blessed”

Matthew 5:1–12 opens the Sermon on the Mount by proclaiming God’s gracious reversal of human expectations rather than a set of moral requirements to earn God’s favor. Jesus addresses his disciples and the gathered crowd, announcing what life looks like under God’s reign.

The Beatitudes describe who is blessed by God, not because of spiritual achievement, but because God draws near to those who are poor in spirit, grieving, meek, hungry for righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, and those persecuted for righteousness’ sake. These blessings are promises, grounded in God’s mercy and faithfulness, not commands to strive for perfection.

Lutherans understand these words primarily as gospel before law. They comfort the afflicted by assuring them that God’s kingdom belongs to those who know their need, suffer injustice, and depend entirely on God’s grace. At the same time, they function as law insofar as they expose humanity’s inability to live fully into this kingdom life on our own, driving us to Christ.

The Beatitudes point ultimately to Jesus himself, who perfectly embodies them and fulfills God’s righteousness on our behalf. In Christ, believers are declared blessed, and through the Holy Spirit, they are shaped into lives that reflect mercy, humility, and peace—not to earn salvation, but as a response to God’s saving grace.



Our Sympathy and Comfort to Pat Engel, family, and friends on the loss of her dear Husband, Dennis.

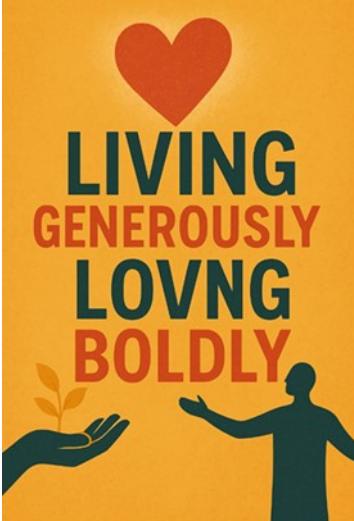
Life is what happens while you are busy making other plans.

Allen Saunders
American writer, journalist and cartoonist

Pastor Steve Talmage returns this Sunday, 2/1

On Friday, January 23, Barb and I were scheduled to fly from Phoenix to Malaga, Spain on the southern coast of Spain for two weeks of vacation. A few days before we left, Barb noticed her blood pressure was exceedingly high. She consulted her cardiologist and got a new prescription, but neither of us were comfortable traveling overseas while she was adjusting to the new medicine. As many in this congregation can empathize with navigating hypertension, please keep Barb in your prayers. We are grateful for the blessing of the staff and community here at Love of Christ.

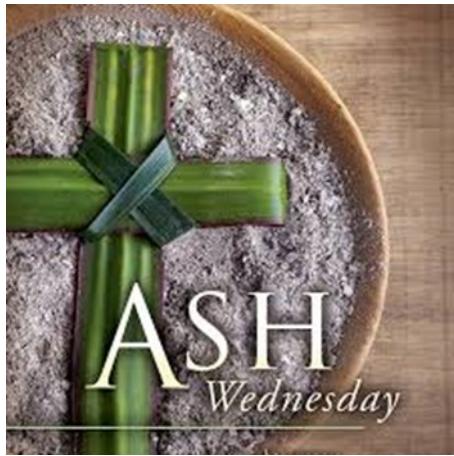
Two New Stories of Living Generously



A young mother rejoices in the generosity of a stranger: "This afternoon my two daughters, 4 and 6, wanted ice cream from the ice cream parlor that's next to the grocery store where we had just finished shopping. But ever since my husband and I were forced to foreclose on our house, we've been budgeting our money down to the penny and only using cash for our necessary purchases. I explained to my daughters that I had only brought enough money for the groceries. They were upset, but OK with it. Then, as we were packing our groceries in our car, the owner of the ice cream parlor walked up with two double scoop ice cream cones. He said, 'I was out front a minute ago and overheard your conversation. Today the ice cream is on me.'"

A man shares a surprising encounter: "On my way home from work today I stopped on the side of the road to help an elderly man who was struggling to change a flat tire on his car. He turned out to be the firefighter who pulled my whole family out of our burning four-story apartment unit when I was a kid. Even though I hadn't seen him in nearly 30 years, it only took me a few seconds to recognize him. We chatted about it for a while, and then as soon as I had the spare tire secured on his car, we looked at each other, shook hands for a prolonged moment and said, 'Thank you,' simultaneously."

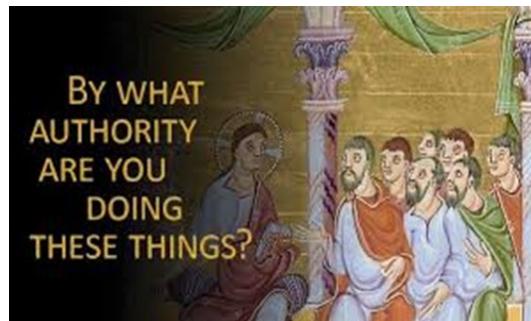
How have you witnessed the power of generosity happening unexpectedly? What difference does it make? Love of Christ is a community which seeks to be known for living generously and loving boldly.



Ash Wednesday Worship, February 18, 2026

Noon or 7PM in the Sanctuary

Ash Wednesday marks the solemn start of Lent, a 40-day journey of repentance and preparation for Easter, reminding us of our mortality ("dust to dust") and sin through the imposition of ashes, while simultaneously pointing to God's mercy, forgiveness, and the promise of new life through Christ's resurrection, transforming our brokenness into belovedness. It's a call to honest self-reflection, confession, and a commitment to living out our baptismal faith through outward actions of love and justice.



By What Authority: Rethinking Early Christian History

Wednesday, at 6PM in the Fellowship Hall

We are on a journey through the first five centuries of the Early Church. It provides helpful background in how the Holy Spirit worked through the global and diverse movement of believers and communities coming together. How they dealt with Emperor and Empire. How they navigated, debated, and determined our early creeds and church organization. This course is on Wednesdays through February 11. Whether you can attend some of the classes or all, all are welcome to join. **Last two topics:** 2/4 Missionary Church, and 2/11 Eastern and Western Church.

Music Notes....



Handbell Ringers Needed

Do you read music and count beats? We would love to have you join our Handbell Choir! We are looking for ringers for monthly Sunday performances.

Rehearsals are held **Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. in the Greenroom**. If you're interested, please let me know—we'd love to ring with you! You can contact me at jungmusic@lolc.org

We can't wait to celebrate this wonderful season of music, fellowship, and joy with all of you.

With gratitude and excitement,
Jung Lee



Calling All Bakers

Cookie Ministry is looking for people who like to bake. The Cookie Ministry is part of the Faith in Action programs at Love of Christ. This ministry makes cookies for our various events that are held here on our campus and beyond our campus. If you are interested in baking cookies for this ministry, please contact Eunice Ketterling at ketts14az@gmail.com



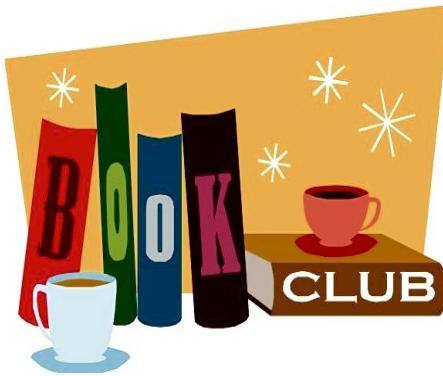
Community Garden News

Come join us and grow something beautiful. Questions, contact Nancy at Dntoll74@gmail.com



Naomi Circle will meet on February 9th, at 1PM in the Fellowship Hall. All women are welcome—invite your friends!

On February 14th, The LOC Hiking Ladies will be traveling to Cave Creek County Park and hiking the Go John and Quartz Loop Trail. This 3.8 mile loop follows along a low ridge on mostly smooth dirt with occasional rocks, ruts, and loose material, opening to wide Sonoran Desert views. Saguars and palo verde trees line the slopes, and as an extra treat, we will pass by the Michelin Man cactus. We will meet at 7:00AM. Contact: Pat Shaw at 480 334-9123 (better to text).



The next meeting of the LOC Book Club will be held on Sunday, March 22nd in the Leadership Room after the 9:00 am service.

We will be discussing **The Glassmaker** by Tracy Chevalier. Here is a synopsis of the book:

In 1486, Orsola Rosso is the eldest daughter in a family of glassblowers in Murano, Italy. As a woman she is not meant to blow glass - but when her father dies, she teaches herself to make beads in secret, and her work becomes the cornerstone of the Rosso family fortune. Skipping through six centuries, we follow the Rosso family as they live through creative triumph and heartbreak. From a plague in Venice to Continental soldiers stripping its palazzos bare, from the domination of Murano and its glass maestros to the transformation of the city of trade into a city of tourists, we experience it all.

In every era, the Rosso women ensure that their work and their bonds, endure.

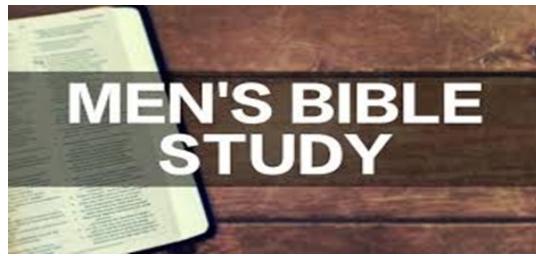
Please join us on March 22nd as we explore the beauty of glassmaking and the family who endured through centuries of change.

Grab a cup of coffee and a treat in the Hospitality Room and head over to the Leadership Room located next to the church offices.

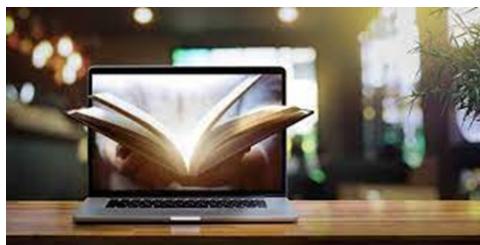
Happy Reading!



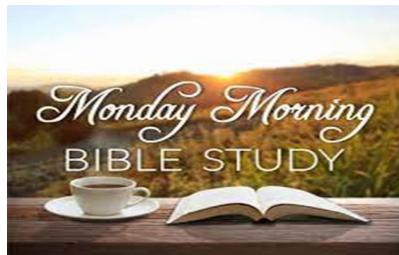
Troop 301/3301 will proudly serve breakfast for Scout Sunday on February 8th, bringing Scouts together in the spirit of service and fellowship. The Scouts will prepare and serve a warm, welcoming meal for the congregation, putting their leadership and teamwork skills into action. In addition to breakfast, the troop will hold a fundraiser selling delicious Nothing Bundt Cakes, helping support upcoming activities and adventures. Each bundt cake will sell for \$7. Cash or checks accepted.



Pastor Steve Talmage will be leading this week's early morning Men's Bible Study on Monday, 6:30-7:30AM in the Leadership Room. We are studying Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Men of all ages are welcome to participate.



Online Video introductions provided by our pastors of Sunday Lectionary readings. They may be found on Facebook, YouTube or loveofchristchurch.net



Monday Morning Bible Study in the Leadership Room

10:30 Coffee Fellowship, 11:00AM Bible Study



Prayer Share Care Women's Bible Study

All women are invited to a weekly Bible study group called Prayer Share Care. This group meets on Thursday afternoons at 1:00 in the Leadership Room. This group will be using Marcus Borg's book: ***Reading the Bible Again for the First Time***. Books can be purchased **at class** for \$10. Please contact Ruth Leonard or Margrit Aeschbach at the following emails for more information. (Margrit: mswiss43@gmail.com and Ruth: rutholeonard@icloud.com)



Faith stretch yoga **meets on Thursdays at 9:00am in Outreach room.**
For questions and more information, text Georgia at 406-925-0013 or
email: nonnagg51@gmail.com .



YOUTH AT LOVE OF CHRIST
CALLED. GATHERED. SENT.

There is hangout this Sunday from 10 to Noon in the Youth Room!

There is Youth Group this Wednesday night from 6-7:30pm in Youth Room!

Contact Mason Weatherly for more info at masonw@loclc.org



Confirmation

Confirmation will be held on Wednesday nights from 6PM to 7PM in the room 48.

Next Confirmation classes are on Wednesday, January 28th and February 4th.

Any questions, please contact Pastor Nanette at nanette@loclc.org

A brief Overview for 2026 Save the Dates:

February 7: Women's Retreat at LoC "It is Well With My Soul"

2026 Lenten Challenge sign up by Feb. 18

February 22: Citrus Sunday and Congregational Meeting

February 23: Lutheran Day at the Legislature, more information coming.

Wednesday during Lent sharing our Outreach Ministries

April 12: 40th Anniversary Celebration

June 11,12,13: Synod Assembly at LoC

Faith in Action Ministry of the Month:

LAMA

This month our Faith In Action Team will be focusing on our Ministry partners that are a part of LAMA (Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Arizona). This organization is a part of the Grand Canyon Synod of the ELCA and works with legislators and our state legislation on Hunger issues in Arizona. LAMA joins with the most vulnerable of our society to voice our common needs in the public square, activating our faith in love.

Lutherans from across Arizona will gather at the Arizona State Capitol on **Monday, February 23, 2026**, from **9:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.** for **Lutheran Day at the Legislature**, a day of faithful advocacy hosted by Lutheran Advocacy Ministry Arizona (LAMA). Registration opens at **8:30 a.m.** at **Wesley Bolin Plaza**, where participants will begin the day with a light breakfast and coffee before stepping into a full morning of learning, witness, and public engagement.

This annual gathering equips and encourages Lutherans to live out our baptismal promise "*to strive for justice and peace in all the earth.*" Throughout the morning, participants will meet their legislators, connect with congregational LAMA liaisons, hear from policy council members, and join other Lutherans committed to justice shaped by our Lutheran faith.

You can go to this link and it will tell you more about this exciting day. <https://www.gcsynod.org/news/join-us-at-the-capitol-lutheran-day-at-the-legislature-returns-feb-23-2026-2>

If you are interested in being a part of the Lutheran Day at the Legislature, please contact Charles Martiny our new LAMA liaison at cmartiny@cox.net. Or you can contact Pastor Nanette at nanette@loclc.org.

Refugee Family Co-Sponsorship with Lutheran Social Services:

Our Co-Sponsorship Team has been helping with a refugee family from Syria. They been working with the adults who are learning English. This team is making wonderful progress and forming some beautiful relationships with the family as well. We have provided back to school clothing and backpacks for each of the four children, along with teaching them English. If you are interested in learning more or think you might like to join this team please, contact Chris Norden at norden6162@gmail.com



About the Lenten Challenge

In 2023, the Grand Canyon Synod and the Southeastern Iowa Synod challenged one another to participate in spiritual and physical practices during the 40 days of Lent. This 40-40-40 Challenge was a good-natured way to engage each other and raise awareness of anti-hunger ministry and wellness for both synods. **In 2024**, all of the ELCA synods in Region 2 challenged one another to raise money for ELCA World Hunger in honor of ELCA World Hunger's 50th year in mission and ministry. **In 2025**, Isaiah 58:11 grounded the year's Lenten journey, in which the five Region 2 synods challenged one another to explore the intersection of hunger and water while learning of one of our Region 2 Indigenous Ministries, the 70-year-old Navajo Evangelical Lutheran Mission (NELM) in Rock Point, AZ.

The 2026 Lenten Challenge theme — “Lord, When Did We See You?”

The theme of this year's challenge derives from Matthew 25:37-40. The passage emphasizes that caring for the poor, sick, and marginalized is an act of service to Christ, and that a person's treatment of others is a reflection of their relationship with God. The spiritual practices for the six weeks of Lent will focus on stretching our learning, care, and advocacy muscles on behalf of underserved communities. The six weeks will be broken up according to the gospel text, as below, with participants focusing on what we know and think about these siblings in Christ, as well as how we act in support and on behalf of these communities. [Refer to the Matthew 25 Lenten Practices Toolkit for ideas.](#)

- **Week 1**, February 22: Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food?
- **Week 2**, March 1: Lord, when was it that we saw you thirsty and gave you something to drink?
- **Week 3**, March 8: Lord, when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you?
- **Week 4**, March 16: Lord, when was it that we saw you naked and gave you clothing?
- **Week 5**, March 22: Lord, when was it that we saw you sick and visited you?
- **Week 6**, March 29: Lord, when was it that we saw you in prison and visited you?

Why Lent? Lent is a season of 40 days to reflect, remember our dependence on God and one another, and look forward to the ways God calls us to be. Adding one or more of these spiritual practices to your observation of Lent might help you feel more connected. A light-hearted challenge like this could help our synods be the Church together, and to see God's vision and invitation for us to be a church for the world as we share the good news of Jesus Christ.

Participating synods:

[Sierra Pacific](#) (2A) – Rev. Jeff Johnson, bishop
[Southwest California](#) (2B) – Rev. Brenda Bos, bishop
[Pacifica](#) (2C) – Rev. David Nagler, bishop
[Grand Canyon](#) (2D) – Rev. Deborah Hutterer, bishop

[Rocky Mountain](#) (2E) – Rev. Meghan Johnston-Aelabouni, bishop

How does the 40-40-40 Lenten Challenge work?

There are 4 Lenten practices to consider, and you commit to 3 of the 4.

Daily Devotion ~ Subscribe to receive devotions every day of Lent via email. These short reflections represent diverse voices and circumstances across our church. [Learn more.](#)

Daily Learning ~ *Suggested learnings for children, youth, families and congregations such as reading ELCA social teachings, studying Matthew Chapter 25, joining ELCA networks, group studies, etc.* are in the Matthew 25 Lenten Practices Toolkit. [Learn more.](#)

Daily Action ~ Suggested actions, such as volunteering at a food bank, donating clothes and sundries, visiting someone in the hospital, and praying for elected leaders can be found in our Matthew 25 Toolkit. [Learn more.](#)

Daily Donation ~ Pledge to give \$1 a day (or more) to ELCA World Hunger for the 40 days of Lent. From health clinics to microloans, water wells to farm animals, community meals to advocacy, your gifts to ELCA World Hunger make it possible for the ELCA to respond, supporting sustainable solutions that get at the root causes of hunger and poverty. [Ways to give.](#)

How is this a Challenge?

This a little friendly competition for a good cause. Individuals from across the Region 2 synods will sign up to do three of four (or all 4!) of the practices and the synod with the most individuals signed up wins the challenge! **Our goal is for individuals representing 50 congregations per synod to participate.**

Join the Cross-Synod Challenge for Lent

The more individual sign-ups, the better.

Bragging rights goes to the synod with the most individual registrations. So if you're a family of 4, enter all 4 email addresses, and have all 4 people commit to 3 things. And no, not all 4 need to donate to ELCA World Hunger (though it's worth considering).

What do we get if we win?

The 'winning' bishop will play a short video with congratulatory clips recorded by the other participating bishops. This acknowledgement of the 'superiority' by the other synods *for this one challenge* is all in fun. All bishops may choose to air the video at their synod assemblies in 2026. Hunger leaders in each synod will receive progress updates each week.

[SIGN UP FOR THE 40-40-40 LENTEN CHALLENGE](#)

Feed My Starving Children Update: The food we packed this past November was sent to the Philippines where our partner [International Care Ministries](#) will receive them. Thank you so much for all that you do.



Our Sunday School Ministry continues on throughout the New Year! For ages 4-2nd grade, Sunday School is from 9:10-9:50. Children are to come to church with their parents and are dismissed for Sunday School after the Children's Message. They return to worship during Communion. For grades 3-6, Sunday school begins at 9:50 and they are done at 10:20. Sunday School takes place in the Godly Play room. For any questions, please contact Pastor Nanette at nanette@loclc.org



Grades 4,5, and 6 will meet in the CoC on February 15th for games, a lesson on worship, and an amazing snack! The fun begins at 3:30 and ends at 5:00! Please contact Laura Ontiveros or Pastor Nanette for more information.

WOW! Word on Wednesdays has resumed!

Children's Musical, Adult Bible Study, and Confirmation/Youth Group begin at 6PM. A light meal will be served at 5:30 in rooms 48 & 49 in Center of Compassion.

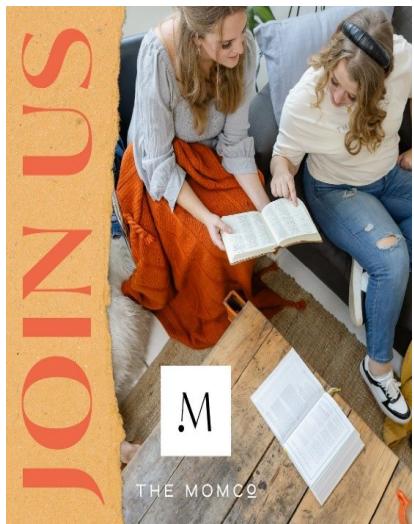
Children's Musical—The FAB 4 Kids Show—Rockin' the Gospels All the Way to the Cross!

Rehearsals are on Wednesdays from 6pm to 7pm in Room 50

Performance: Sunday, May 3rd at 9AM

✿ MomCo at Love of Christ Lutheran Church! ✿

Calling all moms! Whether you're in the thick of toddlerhood, navigating teenage years, or somewhere in between — you're not alone.



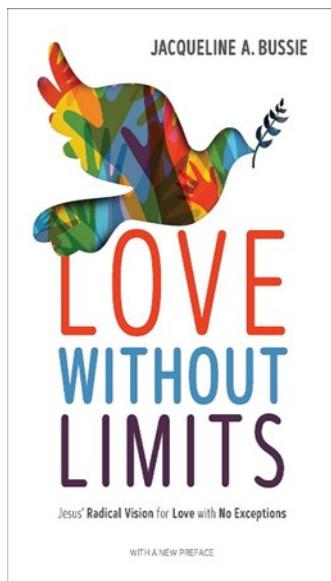
We're excited to announce that our church will now be hosting MomCo, a community designed for moms, by moms. MomCo is a place where women gather in circles of support, friendship, and faith — because raising humans is both beautiful and hard, and no one should have to do it alone:

- Build meaningful, lasting friendships
- Encourage and equip moms to lead with love
- Grow the church by nurturing families in faith
- Bring mothers and their families closer to Jesus

Join Us! Location: Love of Christ

🗓 When: **Next meeting February 4th.** We will be back to the 1st Wednesday of the month in February. | 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM in Godly Playroom (Nursery) located in entrance to Center of Compassion.

📞 Contact: Kacey Weir or Pastor Nanette Christofferson 🌐
Online Options: - <http://www.themom.co/groups/loveofchristmesa>



Love Without Limits meets again on February 4th at 4:30 in the Fellowship Hall.

In her book, Jacqueline Bussie says nothing is more scandalous than a "love without limits." How does a love without limits mirror Jesus and the God we are called to serve? How does this echo Jesus' ministry in Luke 15 (the parables of being lost) or Paul's proclamation in Galatians 3:28 (There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one Christ Jesus)? This study is open to all women who are interested in learning about our God who loves without limits! They will be discussing Chapter 4 for the February 4th meeting.



Lemon (*C. limon*)



Mandarin (*C. reticulata*)



Grapefruit (*C. paradisi*)



Pummelo (*C. grandis*)



Sour orange (*C. aurantium*)



Sweet orange (*C. sinensis*)



Lime (*C. aurantifolia*)



Kumquat (*C. japonica*)



Citron (*C. medica*)



Blood orange (*C. sinensis L. Osbeck*)

Citrus Sunday Is Coming!

On Sunday, February 22, we are asking that you bring your citrus fruit to share with others. Whatever fruit isn't taken by our community will be taken to St. Mary's Food Bank as they accept fresh fruit. Please take your fruit to the tables outside of the COC.



Young Adults are typically between the ages of 18 and 30-5 ish! We are fortunate to have the above Young Adults interested in gathering and learning together. Our next meeting time will be on Sunday, February 15. If you have any questions please, contact Pastor Nanette or Laura Ontiveros.

Sleep in Heavenly Peace News



We are celebrating the 10,000th bed to be delivered soon to a child in the Phoenix area! The Phoenix Chapter began 7 years ago and is still going strong to meet the need of our community.

Thanks to all the donors of time and funds to make this exciting milestone happen. The reason for this effort which improves the lives of children in our community is brought home every time we witness a child receiving a bed for the first time!

We are also fortunate to have a lot of individuals who continue to make blankets and contribute stuffed animals, books and sheets.

THANK YOU!

Scripture Lesson
A Brief Look at Micah 6:1-8
with Pastor Nanette Christofferson
(12 min)

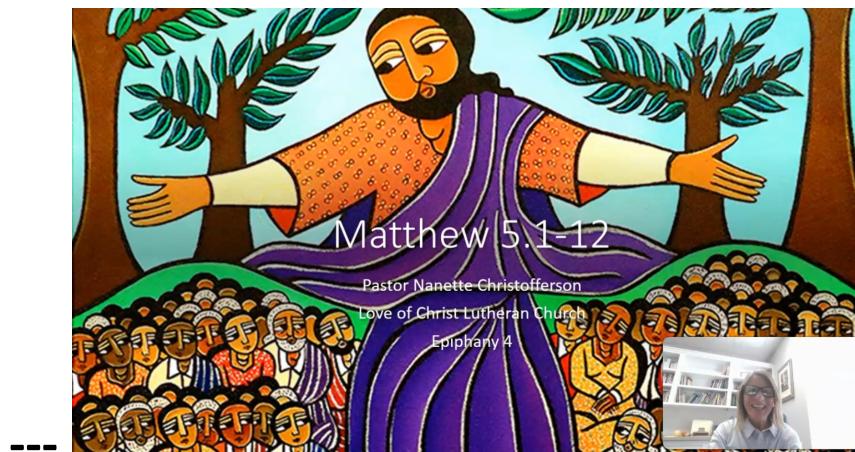


YouTube: <https://youtu.be/STBshvNuTa4>

Facebook: <https://facebook.com/reel/2282595565560128/>

Website: <https://www.loveofchristchurch.net/media/series/7vjwfnk/bible-lessons>

Scripture Lesson
A Brief Look at Matthew 5:1-12
with Pastor Nanette Christofferson
(14 min)



YouTube: <https://youtu.be/yehTX7G6lBM>

Facebook: <https://facebook.com/reel/869849782336148/>

Website: <https://www.loveofchristchurch.net/media/series/7vjwfnk/bible-lessons>

Sunday, February 1. 2026, 7:50 am, 9 and 10:30,

some on  &



Pastor Nanette Christofferson—"Who Are The Blessed"

Bible Version—NRSVUE

Micah 6:1-8

Hear what the Lord says:

Rise, plead your case before the mountains,
and let the hills hear your voice.

Hear, you mountains, the case of the Lord,
and you enduring foundations of the earth,
for the Lord has a case against his people,
and he will contend with Israel.

"O my people, what have I done to you?
In what have I wearied you? Answer me!
For I brought you up from the land of Egypt
and redeemed you from the house of slavery,
and I sent before you Moses,
Aaron, and Miriam.
O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab
devised,
what Balaam son of Beor answered him,
and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,
that you may know the saving acts of the Lord."

"With what shall I come before the Lord
and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?
Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"
He has told you, O mortal, what is good,
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice and to love kindness
and to walk humbly with your God?

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those
who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the
power of God. For it is written,

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scholar?
Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made fool-
ish the wisdom of the world?

For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know
God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolish-
ness of the proclamation,

to save those who believe.

For Jews ask for signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we
proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and
foolishness to gentiles,

but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks,
Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and
God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of
you were wise by human standards, not many were pow-
erful, not many were of noble birth.

But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the
wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the
strong;

God chose what is low and despised in the world, things
that are not, to abolish things that are,

so that no one might boast in the presence of God. In
contrast, God is why you are in Christ Jesus, who became
for us wisdom from God,

and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in
order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast
in the Lord."

Matthew 5:1-12

The Beatitudes

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain,
and after he sat down, his disciples came to him.

And he began to speak and taught them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of
heaven.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteous-
ness, for they will be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called chil-
dren of God.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of
righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute
you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely^b on my
account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven,
for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who
were before you.