

Shepherd of the Desert

Monthly Newsletter

February 2026



Church Council

President: Keith LaShier

Treasurer: Nancy Hempy

Council Secretary: Nancy Fisher

Council Member: Jane Hansen

Council Member: Sheri Thirkell

Council Member: Kim Barnes-Blumberg

Mission Statement

"To be a congregation that puts the Love of Christ into action from generation to another from our community to our world"

Church Staff

Senior Pastor: John Maroni

jpmaroni17@gmail.com

Admin. Secretary: Kristen Wood

secretarysod1@gmail.com

Finance Secretary: Judy Yates

Jyates717@gmail.com

Church office Phone #

623-933-1359

To watch online Sunday Worship and more information about S.O.D you can visit our website. **www.sdaz.org**

Singing a New Song Together

Martin Luther once remarked that "next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world." In the Lutheran tradition, music is a vital means of proclaiming the Gospel as we "lift up our hearts" with one collective voice. I want to take a moment to share some details about worship services at Shepherd of the Desert.

Our Sunday morning services are anchored in the rich, liturgical heritage that defines us. Led by our organist, Kevin Deyager, these services offer "the thundering majesty" enjoyed by generations of Lutherans. The organ can be considered "the king of instruments" as it helps us to set the Lord's Day apart and connects us to the saints who have gone before us.

While all of our worship services include the Sacrament of Holy Communion, we recognize the Holy Spirit speaks through different worship styles. Therefore, our Saturday evening services offer a rotation of musical expressions.

1. On the first, third, and fifth Saturdays of the month, the Saturday services are piano-led by Linda McClentic who brings the elegance of classical music and we sing together the beloved classic hymns in a quieter, more contemplative atmosphere.
2. On the second and fourth Saturdays, we are experimenting with something new. Tony Lake is leading these services with the piano and vocals. Tony brings a more contemporary style. There is less liturgy but still a recognizable form of worship that uses modern songs or a fresh approach to classical hymns.

Scripture calls us to use our voices and musical instruments when we give God our thanks and praise. In Psalm 98:1, we are exhorted to "Sing to the Lord a new song." From the pipes and strings mentioned in Psalm 150 to the melodies of today, every note serves a single purpose: pointing our hearts toward the grace of Jesus Christ and bringing us together, into one voice.

I look forward to hearing all your voices joined in harmony as we gather for worship on Sundays at 9:00 a.m. and Saturdays at 4:00 p.m.

Grace, Peace and Joy,
Pastor John Maroni

Ongoing February Activities

Bible Study with Pastor John

Monday at 10:00am. Bring your bible and a beverage. We are meet in the Founders Room. We are reading the lessons for the upcoming weekend services.

Ladies Book Club

Wednesday at 9:00 am. The Book they will be reading is The Story of Ruth by Liz Curtis Higgs. The cost is \$5.00. Please reach out to Nancy Fisher if you need a book.

Choir Rehearsals

Come and join Kevin DeYager, our Sunday Organist, as we rehearse choir music for the upcoming services. The rehearsals for **February 3rd & 17th** in the Sanctuary at 2:00 p.m.

Paint Night

February 11th at 5:30 p.m. Please make sure to sign up so we can plan on snacks and supplies. Bring a beverage there is snacks provided. This is the painting for February Paint Night.



Pancake Breakfast

February 28th 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. in Walton Hall. The price is right FREE!!!
This is a free breakfast for the community and S.O.D.

Lenten Soup Suppers

A Soup Supper will begin at 6:00 p.m. in Walton Hall – February 25, March 4, March 11, March 18, and March 25. The meal will be provided first followed by a scripture message or guest speaker. There will be a sign up sheet if you would like to bring a soup or other options for these dates.

council Presidents Message – February 2026

Church activities have continued after the busy nature of the Christmas and Holiday season.

We are back to our weekly Monday morning Bible Study; the Ladies Book Club on Wednesday mornings, Paint Night was held on January 14th; Game Night was held January 23rd and the monthly Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, January 31st.

Your church council and endowment committee each met to begin planning for 2026 initiatives. Elections were held to fill the leadership positions.

- **Endowment Committee:** Chairperson – Judy Briggs; Secretary – Sheila Conn; and Financial Secretary – John Wallrath. Nancy Hempy also serves as the Treasurer.
- **Church Council:** President – Keith LaShier; Vice President – Sheri Thirkell; Secretary – Nancy Fisher; and Treasurer – Nancy Hempy.

Lenten Schedule – We hope to see everyone at the various Lenten services and events.

- **Ash Wednesday:** Sanctuary – February 18th, service begins at 6:30 p.m. No meal afterwards.
- **Lenten Soup Suppers:** Walton Hall – February 25; March 4; March 11; March 18; and March 25. A Soup Supper will begin at 6:00 p.m. The meal will be provided first followed by a scripture message or guest speaker. Sign-up lists will be provided.

Additional Events are noted below, add them to your calendar.

- **Tea Tasting – 11:00 a.m. on February 16th in the Founders Room**
- **St. Patrick's Day – 4:00 p.m. on March 15, 2026 in Walton Hall. Food and refreshments will be provided.**

Save this date for another fun-filled event as we celebrate the Feast of Saint Patrick. The celebration commemorates the arrival of Christianity in Ireland and recognizes the heritage and culture of the Irish.

Memorial Service for Marcella Haught – 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 21st.
Refreshments after the service.

Remember, volunteers are always needed to meet the needs of managing and running our church. Please consider what you can do to assist the staff, Council, and program leaders.

Gods Peace to You,

Keith E. LaShier,

Council President



Make a Resolution to Volunteer – Jan '26

Make a New Year's Resolution That Truly Makes a Difference in 2026!

As we prepare to welcome a new year, many of us are thinking about resolutions—opportunities to reset, reconnect, and renew our sense of purpose. This year, we invite you to consider a resolution that blesses both our community and your own spirit: becoming a volunteer at the Lutheran Thrift Shop in 2026.

For over 30 years, the Thrift Shop has been a ministry of compassion, stewardship, and service. Every donated item, every hour volunteered, and every dollar earned helps support missions, ministries, and neighbors in need throughout the West Valley. Yet this vital work depends on the hands and hearts of people like you. Why volunteer?

Volunteering strengthens our shared ministry; income from the Thrift Shop supports programs and outreach efforts across our member churches. **Volunteering builds community;** we work alongside friendly people, form new friendships, and share in meaningful fellowship. **Volunteering fits your availability;** Whether you can help once a week, once a month, or during special events, there's a role that fits your gifts. **Most importantly, It keeps our 35,000-square-foot ministry thriving;** As longtime volunteers retire, we rely on new energy to carry the mission forward.

Ways you can serve? Glad you asked! Sorting and pricing donations, assisting customers on the sales floor,

testing and preparing household items and organizing books, clothing, or specialty departments. And the best part, no experience is required. Just a willingness to help and a heart for serving others. Let's step into 2026 with a resolution that brings joy, strengthens our churches, and blesses the community we serve. We hope to see many new faces joining our mission in the year ahead!

We welcome individuals, couples, small groups, youth, retirees—anyone who wants to make a difference. Call the shop for a tour and see where you can help! 623-815-7061

Keep up with the LTS by following us on Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/westvalleylutheranthriftshop/>

Or at our website: www.lutheranthrift.com



February – Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest.

They respond to Arizona's changing needs by compassionately offering quality services and resources that contribute to a stronger healthier Arizona for all people.

Tea Tasting



Come and try different types of teas and how they pair with chocolate.

February 16th at 11:00 am in the Founders Room. Make sure to sign up so we can plan for you!

ASH WEDNESDAY

February 18, 2026

**Service begins at
6:30 p.m. in the
Sanctuary.**

Worship Attendance

	Sat.	Sun.	Visitor
Jan. 3 & 4	33	49	
Jan. 10 & 11	24	53	1
Jan. 17 & 18	22	55	
Jan. 24 & 25	30	49	



Sunday Feb. 22nd. We are going to Organ Stop! We will meet at the church to carpool. You can meet us there if you would like to drive on you own. We will leave the church at 2 pm. Make sure to sign up so we can plan on rides if needed. Join us for a fun outing!

Do you need a Notary? Call the church office and schedule a time with Judy Yates. 623-933-1359

NOTARY
SERVICES



Juanita Diaz	2/04
Kim Simons	2/08
Larry Thorson	2/08
Rev. Art Goetz	2/09
Lisa Maroni	2/12
Dan Smith	2/23
Kay Moline	2/28