

Shepherd of the Desert

Monthly Newsletter

April 2026



Church Council

President: Keith LaShier

Vice President: Sheri Thirkell

Treasurer: Nancy Hempy

Council Secretary: Nancy Fisher

Council Member: Jane Hansen

Council Member: Kim Barnes-Blumberg

Mission Statement

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

Church Staff

Senior Pastor: John Maroni

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Admin. Secretary: Kristen Wood

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

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

-- Galatians 6:2

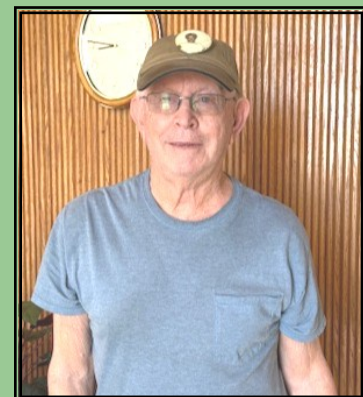
Easter is the ultimate story of hope, but it is also a story of divine support. Just as the stone was rolled away to reveal an empty tomb, we are reminded that we are never left to carry our burdens alone. This theme of "support" has taken on a very literal—and comfortable—meaning in our own sanctuary recently.

You may have noticed a fresh look and feel in the Sanctuary. I want to extend a special thank you to **Richard Weidman**, who has spent a great deal of time and effort replacing the covers on all the pew cushions throughout the sanctuary. These cushions serve a vital purpose: providing essential back support for many in our community. It was a significant undertaking, and Richard's craftsmanship ensures that our place of worship remains a welcoming, comfortable space for all who enter.

This project serves as a beautiful metaphor for our life together as a congregation. Just as those cushions provide physical relief and steadying support, we are called to be a "cushion" for one another in a spiritual and emotional sense. In a world that can often feel hard or unforgiving, the church is meant to be the place where the "padding" is thickest.

As we celebrate the Risen Christ this month, let's look for ways to offer that same "back support" to those around us. Whether through a kind word or a helping hand, we can ensure that no one in our community has to lean back into a hard place alone.

Blessings,
Pastor John Maroni



(Richard Weidman
attends Saturday Services)

Ongoing April 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

will be starting a new book beginning April 8th. *The Red Tent* by Anita Diamant cost will be 5\$ per book if you would like a book please contact Nancy Fisher. Ladies Book Club meets Wednesday at 9:00 a.m. in the Founders Room.

Choir Rehearsals

Come and join Kevin DeYager, our Sunday Organist, as we rehearse choir music for the upcoming services. The rehearsals for April are April 14, and 21. We will meet in the Sanctuary at 2:00 p.m.

Paint Night

April 8th 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 April Paint Night.



Game Night

April 24th at 6:00 p.m. in the Founders Room. We will have Trivia Night for this Game Night. Snacks provided but bring a beverage of your choice.

Pancake Breakfast

April 25th 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.

Last year for the April 2025 Newsletter we provided everyone an update on our Spirt Lift Bus Program. We have a group of individuals monitoring the condition of our current bus and they have looked at options that might allow us to upgrade to a newer vehicle.



One option being considered is purchase of a relatively new (but used) van that could hold 10 passengers. We hope we can bring one of these vans to SOD later in April for us to look at and have our members see one option that is being considered.

Lenten Season

We have had great turnouts at the weekly Soup Suppers and have enjoyed different speakers share with us the ministry of their programs. The soup dinners have been awesome, and the variety of selections is impressive.

Easter Services

We are in the final stages of the Lenten Season and have several church services ahead of us as I write this message. Palm Sunday is March 29th but we will also celebrate it on Saturday, March 28th. There will be palm branches handed out at those services so be prepared to wave them high in the air when a special musical piece is played for us.

Maundy Service is on Thursday, April 2nd. The service will begin at 6:30 p.m. and we hope to see you there.

Good Friday is Friday, April 3rd with the service beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Easter Services will be provided on Saturday, April 4th at 4:00 p.m. and on Sunday, April 5th at 9:00 a.m. We hope to see everyone at these special Easter services.

Special Musical Treat on April 19, 2026

The choir will be performing several musical treats at this service as a thanks to everyone for supporting them this year. The choir will be taking a sabbatical for the summer and will resume in the fall.

God's Peace to You,
Keith E. LaShier, Council President



April - Shepherd of the Desert Youth

Two members of the congregation will receive financial support towards their college tuition and expenses.



Volunteerism is alive & well here!

In March, we held our annual Volunteer Appreciation dinner where we celebrated the hundreds of volunteers who generously give thousands of hours each year at the shop and from home. According to IndependentSector.org, the value of a volunteer hour in Arizona was \$34.49 in 2025.

Those donated hours save the shop millions of dollars in salaries - money that can instead be granted to many West Valley non-profits. Way to go, volunteers - that's good business!

Their generosity is also a wonderful example of faith in action - neighbors helping neighbors and sharing God's love through service.

Join us, won't you? Shop with us, donate your gently used goods, or become a volunteer. Bring your donations to our back door on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 - 3. We pick up furniture (and large items) from smoke-free, pet-free homes by appointment. Call us today to schedule a tour or a donation pick-up at **623-815-7061**.

Check out our website www.lutherantrift.com for more shop info and pictures and follow us on [Facebook.com/westvalleylutherantriftshop](https://www.facebook.com/westvalleylutherantriftshop) for weekly sales and special events



Sharon Bradley	4/03
Sheri Thirkell	4/05
Daniel Cerka	4/07
Kim Barnes- Blumberg	4/11
Stephan Linthicum	4/24
Nancy Fisher	4/25
Jeff Hansen	4/29
Tricia Latioiait	4/30



Service times at Shepherd of the Desert

Passion of the Palms Saturday March 28th 4 p.m.

Palm Sunday March 29th at 9 a.m.

Maundy Thursday 6:30 p.m.

Good Friday 6:30 p.m.

Easter Saturday April 4th 4p.m.

Easter Sunday April 5th 9:00 a.m.

Worship Attendance

	Sat.	Sun.	Visitor
Feb. 23 & March 1	23	52	3
March 8 & 9	20	70	3
March 14 & 15	34	64	9
March 21 & 22	28	70	

Thank you to the Church Council for a great time at the St. Patty's Day Party!



Thanks for all the hard work and a great meal prepared by Nancy Fisher and Sheri Thirkell.



SAVE THE DATES! FIRST WEDNESDAY BINGO AT SHEPHERD OF THE DESERT!

When: First Wednesday of every month from May through November. All bingo nights will begin at 5PM.

What: Fellowship and Games: Bingo and Prizes; Food and Surprises.

Where: Walton Hall (Bus transportation may be available)

The first one is May 6th at 5PM. Pizza and Bingo.
Sign up in the Narthex beginning after Easter.



Rob & Sheri Thirkell

4/02/2005