

# AMERICA



**CELEBRATORY WORSHIP**  
JULY 4 & 5, 2026

**SATURDAY 4pm**  
**SUNDAY 8:00 & 9:30am**

**“Being a Christian in America”**

Freedom is a gift worth celebrating — and a gift we are called to remember well. As our nation marks 250 years of independence, we gather with joy and gratitude for the liberties we have received, mindful of the history, sacrifice, and responsibility that come with them.

\*The Sonoran Brass Quintet will bring special music during our Sunday services.



**PATRIOTIC POTLUCK**  
**SUN, JULY 5, 11am**

Join us as we celebrate American Independence with food, fellowship, and live music! We'll provide a selection of chilled beverages. Bring a favorite dish to share—hamburgers, hot dogs, grilled chicken, potato salad, coleslaw, watermelon, vegetarian and gluten-free options, or a dessert are all welcome!

Enjoy live entertainment from the Sonoran Brass Quintet, known for their rich brass sound and dynamic performances featuring patriotic favorites, classical music, jazz, and more.



**MOVIE MATINEE**  
**MON, JULY 13, 9:30am**

We will be showing **A Great Awakening**, a film that invites us to reflect on faith, hope, and the ways God continues to work in the hearts of His people. **This event is FREE** and open to everyone.

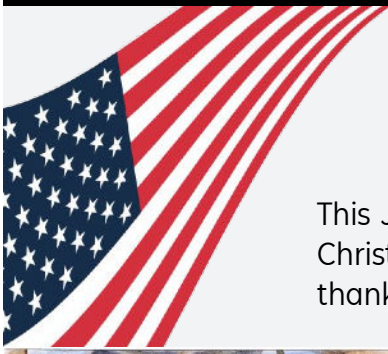
We hope to see you there!



Todd Mathison, Lead Pastor  
Denton Bennet, Associate Pastor  
Dirk Duhlstine, Chaplain

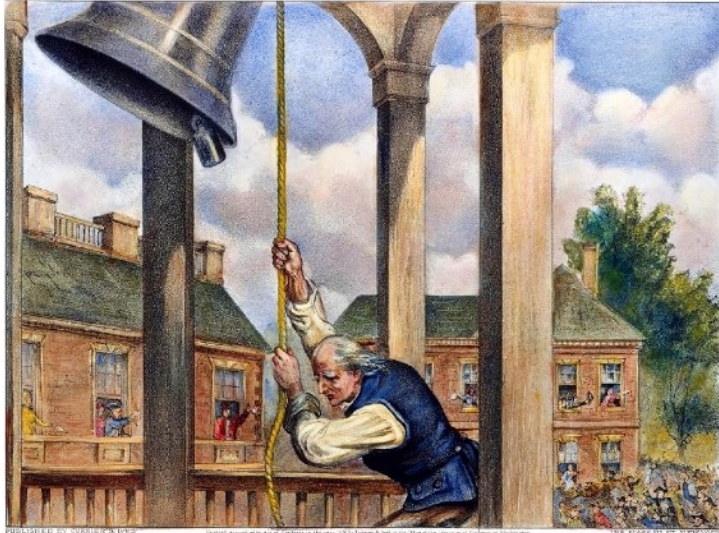
5946 E. University Drive, Mesa, AZ 85205  
480-830-5024 | Office Hours: M-Th, 8am-4pm  
hello@victorylutheran.com  
VictoryLutheran.com





# CHERISH THE GIFT OF FREEDOM

This July, our nation hits a remarkable milestone: America's 250th Anniversary. For Christians, this is more than a holiday weekend; it's an invitation to remember, give thanks, pray, and cherish the freedoms God has entrusted to us.



**THE TOCSIN OF LIBERTY.**  
Rung by the State House Bell, (Independence Hall) Philadelphia, July 4<sup>th</sup> 1776.  
"PROCLAIM LIBERTY THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND, UNTO ALL THE INHABITANTS THEREOF" 1857 XXXI 10.

"The Tocsin Of Liberty" - Ringing the Liberty Bell at the State House in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on July 4, 1776.

Freedom is great to enjoy yet easy to forget. Most of us wake up each morning with liberties so familiar that we scarcely notice them. We gather for worship without fear, open the Bible in our homes, and openly teach our children and grandchildren the truth of God's Word. We speak according to conscience, serve our neighbors, participate faithfully as engaged citizens, and share the Gospel.

These freedoms are normal to us. But they are not normal everywhere, and they have not been normal through much of history. So this month, let us receive these freedoms as gifts — not as ultimate or saving gifts, but real gifts from the hand of God.

Our first allegiance is always to Jesus Christ. Our citizenship in heaven is secure because of Him. Yet Scripture also teaches us that God places us in particular times and places. He has placed us here, in this country, at this moment.



This matters more than ever, in a season when our nation often feels divided, anxious, and weary. Christians are not called to add more fear to the world nor to retreat in bitterness. Yet we must always be careful to not confuse the kingdom of God with any earthly nation. Jesus said we are salt and light (Matthew 5:13&14). We are called to pray, speak truth, love our neighbors, serve those in need — and to live as people whose hope is not shaken by the headlines because our hope is anchored in Christ.

So, as we celebrate America's 250th Anniversary, let us do so with clear eyes and grateful hearts. We can give thanks for what is good without pretending everything has always been good. We can honor sacrifice without idolizing the nation. We can cherish freedom without forgetting that our deepest freedom is found only in Christ.

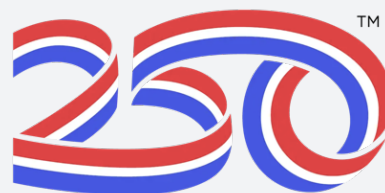
"For freedom Christ has set us free" (Galatians 5:1). That is our deepest freedom — sins forgiven, death defeated, and life secured in Christ.

Grateful in Christ Jesus,

*Pastor Todd Mathison*

Pastor Todd Mathison

# AMERICA



## AZ Diamondbacks Faith & Family Night Friday, August 21 @ 6:40pm

Join the D-backs and hundreds of churches across Arizona at Chase Field for Faith & Family Night! Special music performance by Christian artist, Matthew West, following the game. All-You-Can-Eat-Seats (Sections 221-223) includes unlimited hot dogs, popcorn, peanuts, chips and Pepsi products through 7th inning.

**Tickets \$55 + \$5 if riding the bus. Pay by check or exact cash. Deadline: August 2nd.**

Victory has reserved a total of 50 tickets. Limited seating on bus (28 seats). Bus leaves Victory at 5:15pm or you may want to drive yourself or Park & Ride from the Valley Metro LightRail Station. Come out and support your D-backs as we take on the Reds!

Please note: The Diamondbacks stadium has a "clear bag" policy no larger than 12" x 6". Additionally, fans may also carry a small clutch purse no larger than 4.5" x 6.5". Seat cushions no larger than 18" are permitted. We suggest bringing a clear water bottle to refill.

D-BACKS VS. CINCINNATI REDS

# FAITH & FAMILY NIGHT



Friday, August 21, 6:40pm

- All-You-Can-Eat-Seats (Sections 221-223)
- Tickets \$55 + \$5 if riding the bus
- Limited seating on bus (28 seats)
- Pay at time of sign-up at the Welcome Desk



[DDBACKS.COM/FAITH](http://DDBACKS.COM/FAITH)



Deadline to purchase tickets:  
August 2, 2026



## Men's Breakfast Fellowship Thursday, July 30 @ 7am

*"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another."*  
Proverbs 27:17

Victory's weekly men's small groups are where true "iron sharpening iron" takes place as men study God's Word, encourage one another, and grow together in faith. Our new Men of Victory Monthly Breakfast offers another opportunity to connect with men from across the congregation—whether you already belong to a small group or not, and whether you have been at Victory for years or have only recently arrived.

We hosted our first exploratory breakfast on June 22, and fourteen men attended. Two others contacted us to say they could not make it but are definitely planning to join us next time.

Our next Men's Monthly Breakfast will be held **Thursday, July 30, from 7:00–8:30am** in the meeting room at **IHOP, 10662 E. Southern Avenue, near Signal Butte**. There is no need to sign up—just show up! Each man will order and pay for his own breakfast from the menu.

We also invite every man at Victory to consider joining one of our weekly men's groups:

**Mondays @ 8am** — Men's Prayer Breakfast, Leisure World Rendezvous Café

**Wednesdays @ 10am** — "Duck Club" Men's Bible Study, Church - Room C1

**Saturdays @ 8am** — Men's Small Group, Church - Room C5

Come for breakfast, meet some new friends,  
and discover how God can strengthen us through Christian brotherhood.



## When a Group Looks Outward

There is a moment that happens in the life of a healthy small group. The coffee is poured, the prayer requests have been shared, the study is good, and the conversation is real. People have come to trust each other. And then someone says it out loud: "What if we did something together? Not just for us, but for somebody else?"

That moment is worth paying attention to. It is one of the surest signs that a group has stopped being a meeting on a calendar and has begun to become a small body of believers ready to be the hands and feet of Christ.

A few of our groups are standing in exactly that moment right now. They are beginning to dream about cause-driven outreach, about taking the love they have found around the table and carrying it out the door to people they may never meet. One group is praying about a ministry of written encouragement to people who are isolated and often forgotten. Another is to explore a simple, hands-on way to meet the practical needs of struggling neighbors. The specifics are still taking shape, and that is exactly as it should be. These things are best grown slowly and prayerfully.

What strikes me about both of these conversations is how ordinary the starting point is. Nobody is launching a program. Nobody is trying to solve poverty or fix the whole world by Labor Day. They are simply asking what it would look like to give away a little of what God has given them; — a letter, a bag of necessities, an hour of time. The Kingdom of God has always advanced through small acts done in love, and the New Testament is full of churches that were never large but always generous.

If your group has been wondering whether it is "ready" for something like this, let me gently push back on the question. You do not need to be a polished organization to bless someone. You need willing hearts and a little bit of follow-through. Jesus fed thousands, starting with a boy's lunch. He did not wait for the resources to look impressive before he asked for them.

So here is my invitation as we move into July. Bring the question to your group on purpose. Set aside fifteen minutes one evening and ask it plainly: who is God putting on our hearts, and what is one small thing we could actually do? Don't rush to the



answer. Pray about it for a few weeks. Notice the needs you keep bumping into. Pay attention to the person in the group whose eyes light up at a particular idea, because that spark is often how the Spirit gets our attention.

And then, when you have a sense of direction, tell us. We want to help. We can connect you with resources, point you to partners already doing similar work, and ensure your effort is sustainable rather than a one-time burst that burns everyone out. Outreach lasts longest when it is supported, not improvised.

A group that turns outward is a group that grows up. It discovers that the love it has been receiving was never meant to be hoarded. It was meant to be spent. My prayer for our small groups this summer is simple: that we would be people who not only gather, but who go.

If your group is ready to begin that conversation, I would love to hear about it. Reach out to me anytime.



In Christ's Service,

Pastor Denton Bennet  
480-830-5024 xt. 115

To learn more about joining or hosting a group, contact Pastor Denton at: [dbennet@victorylutheran.com](mailto:dbennet@victorylutheran.com)

Visit: [victorylutheran.com/smallgroups](http://victorylutheran.com/smallgroups)

# Father's Day Weekend · June 20-21, 2026



## SERMON SERIES: The Recipe of a Godly Life

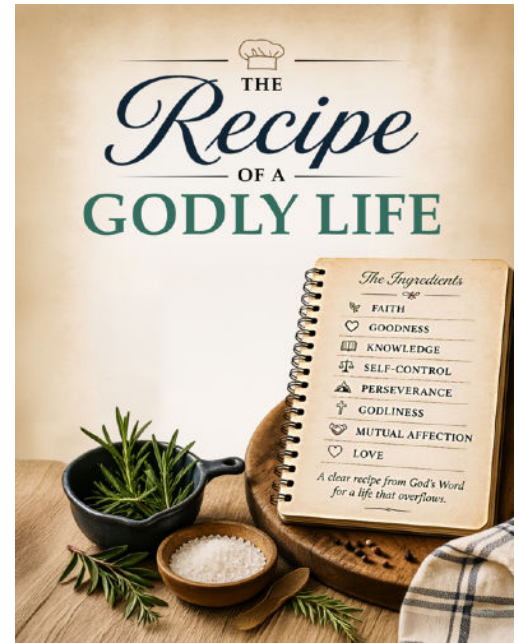
### July 4 & 5 - "Being a Christian In America" John 18:33-37

Freedom is easy to enjoy and easy to forget, so as we celebrate 250 years of freedom in America, Christians should receive these liberties with joy and gratitude, remember the history and cost behind them, and steward them faithfully for the good of our neighbors. Through the biblical teaching of the Two Kingdoms, we honor earthly government as God's gift for order and justice, while never confusing America with the kingdom of Christ. Our deepest hope is not in politics, power, or national strength, but in Jesus Christ — crucified, risen, reigning, and sending us into the world as humble, courageous witnesses.

### July 11 & 12 - "Mutual Affection & Love"

#### John 13:1-5, 12-17, 34-35

Jesus kneels to wash His disciples' feet and then commands them to love one another as He has loved them. First Corinthians 13 reminds us that even giftedness, generosity, and commitment amount to nothing without love, which exposes how often our own love is thin, selective, and conditional. But Christ has loved us first, served us in mercy, washed us clean by grace, and now reshapes the way we live, serve, forgive, and care for one another.



## NEW SUMMER SERMON SERIES: Joy That Holds — The Book of Philippians

Real Christian joy is not fragile, shallow, or dependent on perfect circumstances, but is rooted in the grace, presence, and sufficiency of Jesus Christ. From gospel partnership and suffering, to humility, perseverance, contentment, and peace, this series in the Book of Philippians reminds us that Jesus forms a resilient joy in His people as they walk together, serve faithfully, and hold fast to Him. In a world full of pressure, anxiety, division, and disappointment, Philippians calls us to a deeper joy that does not let go because Christ has first taken hold of us.

### July 18 & 19 - "Never Meant to Walk Alone" Philippians 1:1-11

Paul begins with deep affection, reminding the Philippians that the Christian life is never a solo project but a shared life in the gospel. Their partnership is not built on convenience or chemistry, but on the grace of God that has bound them together in Christ. This opening sermon sets the tone for the whole series: real joy grows where people are rooted in Jesus and committed to one another.

### July 25 & 26 - "God Uses What You're Going Through" Philippians 1:12-26

Paul is in prison, yet he refuses to see his suffering as proof that God has failed. Instead, he shows that Christ can use even painful, unwanted circumstances according to His will. This sermon will help you see that what feels like a setback may actually be one of the places where Jesus is doing His strongest work.

**JOIN US**

# PRAYER & PRAISE

**WORSHIP SERVICE**

**4:00 pm**

**Wednesday, July 1**

**A welcoming space to worship in song and experience God's presence.**

## Monthly Prayer & Praise

**Wednesday, July 1 @ 4pm in the courtyard Chapel**

Take a break from the midweek rush and join us for an hour of Scripture, worship, and prayer. Together, we'll lift up our nation, community, church, and one another while experiencing the encouragement and unity found in Christ.

This blended worship service features a mix of praise songs and traditional hymns, creating a meaningful time of reflection, praise, and connection.

Come as you are, bring a friend, and refresh your spirit in the presence of the Lord.

— Chaplain Dirk Duhlstine



# SUMMER DRIVE TO SAVE LIVES



**BLOOD DRIVE**



Victory Lutheran Church

## **BLOOD DRIVE**

**Wednesday, July 29, 2026  
8:30am-11:00am**

Vitalant Bloodmobile in Parking Lot 5946 E. University Drive, Mesa

To reserve your donation time, sign up online at:

[vitalant.org](https://vitalant.org)

Enter Blood Drive Code: **VLC**  
(or scan the QR code above)

Donors giving blood May 22-September 11, will be automatically entered to win a 2026 VW Taos S, donated by our Valley Volkswagen dealers.

For questions, please contact Vitalant at 877-258-4825.

 **DONATE BLOOD**  
vitalant.org | 877-25-VITAL



**ADVANCE APPOINTMENTS** are encouraged.

*"Being transformed by our joyful and loving church"*

- Sermon Series (p. 6)
- Father's Day Photos (p. 5)

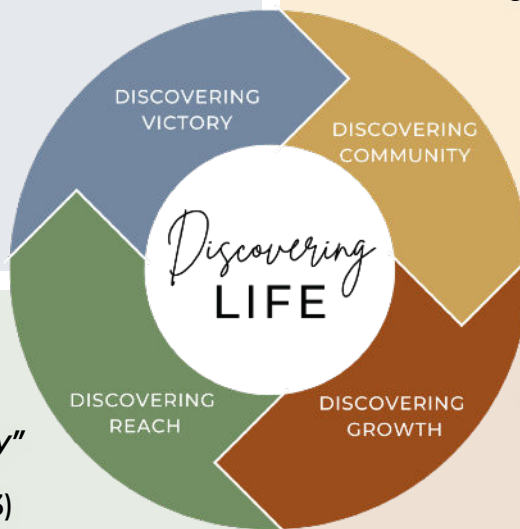


*"Building relationships and serving with others in God's family"*

- Patriotic Potluck (p. 1)
- Small Groups (p. 4)
- GriefShare Group (p. 13)

*"Extending God's love and Good News locally and globally"*


- Dbacks Faith & Family Night (p. 3)



*"Deepening faith daily through God's Word and prayer"*

- Prayer & Praise (p. 6)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
<p><b>JOIN US</b> <b>PRAYER &amp; PRAISE</b></p> <p><b>4pm - courtyard Chapel</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday, July 1</b></p> <p>1st Wednesday of the month A welcoming space to worship in song and experience God's presence.</p>		<p><b>BLESSED</b> <i>be the</i> <b>NATION</b> <i>whose</i> <b>GOD IS THE LORD</b></p> <p><i>Psalm 33:12</i></p>	<p>1</p> <p>9-11:30am Food Pantry 10am Men's Bible Study, C1 12:30pm Al-Anon, C4 <b>4pm Prayer &amp; Praise Worship Service, CH</b></p> 
<p>5</p> <p><b>COMMUNION WEEKEND</b> 8:30-11am Morning Fellowship, FH 8am Worship &amp; Communion, WC 9:30am Worship, WC <b>11am Patriotic Potluck, FH</b></p> 	<p>6</p> <p>9-11:30am Food Pantry 12:30pm GriefShare, C4</p>	<p>7</p> <p>7pm AA Men's Meeting, C5</p>	<p>8</p> <p>9-11:30am Food Pantry 10am Men's Bible Study, C1 12:30pm Al-Anon, C4 2pm Bill Harrison AZ Road Scholar Presentation</p>
<p>12</p> <p>8:30-11am Morning Fellowship, FH 8am Worship &amp; Communion, WC 9:30am Worship, WC</p>	<p>13</p> <p>9-11:30am Food Pantry <b>9:30am Movie Matinee, FH</b> 12:30pm GriefShare, C4</p> 	<p>14</p> <p>9:30am Women's Ministry Combined Bible Study, C4 4:30pm Board &amp; Batten Dinner (off-site) 7pm AA Men's Meeting, C5</p>	<p>15</p> <p>9-11:30am Food Pantry 10am Men's Bible Study, C1 12:30pm Al-Anon, C4</p>
<p>19</p> <p>8:30-11am Morning Fellowship, FH 8am Worship &amp; Communion, WC 9:30am Worship, WC</p>	<p>20</p> <p>9-11:30am Food Pantry 12:30pm GriefShare, C4</p>	<p>21</p> <p>6:30pm "Seekers" Small Group, B7 3pm Council Meeting, B7 7pm AA Men's Meeting, C5</p>	<p>22</p> <p>9am Feed My Starving Children (off-site) Bus leaves @ 8am 9-11:30am Food Pantry 10am Men's Bible Study, C1 12:30pm Al-Anon, C4</p>
<p>26</p> <p>8:30-11am Morning Fellowship, FH 8am Worship &amp; Communion, WC 9:30am Worship, WC</p>	<p>27</p> <p>9-11:30am Food Pantry 12:30pm GriefShare, C4</p>	<p>28</p> <p>7pm AA Men's Meeting, C5</p>	<p>29</p> <p>9-11:30am Food Pantry 10am Men's Bible Study, C1 12:30pm Al-Anon, C4</p>

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
2 10am Prayer Group, B7 11am Al-Anon Meeting, C5	3 OFFICE CLOSED	4 COMMUNION WEEKEND 8am Men's Bible Study, C5 4pm Worship, WC 
9 10am Prayer Group, B7 11am Al-Anon Meeting, C5	10 OFFICE CLOSED	11 8am Men's Bible Study, C5 4pm Worship, WC
16 10am Prayer Group, B7 11am Al-Anon Meeting, C5 11:30am-1:30pm Stephen Ministers, C4	17 OFFICE CLOSED	18 8am Men's Bible Study, C5 4pm Worship, WC
23 10am Prayer Group, B7 11am Al-Anon Meeting, C5	24 OFFICE CLOSED	25 8am Men's Bible Study, C5 4pm Worship, WC
30 10am Prayer Group, B7 11am Al-Anon Meeting, C5	31 OFFICE CLOSED	1 - AUGUST 8am Men's Bible Study, C5 4pm Worship, WC



**VICTORY'S WEEKLY BULLETIN**

In case you missed any of the stories or would like to read again, go to the link below:

[victorylutheran.com/the-pulse/](http://victorylutheran.com/the-pulse/)

If you have a story to share of healing, praise, gratitude, serving in a mission or ministry at Victory, please send to [hello@victorylutheran.com](mailto:hello@victorylutheran.com)

(250-300 word limit)

**DAILY HOPE**  
DEVOTIONAL

**SUBSCRIBE**

Text the word **victory** to

**888-897-5573**

Receive a short daily devotional and Bible verse directly to your phone.

**Have you moved or changed your phone number?**

Help us by making sure we have your most current information

Email:

[dsnyder@victorylutheran.com](mailto:dsnyder@victorylutheran.com)

- C1 = Luther Room
- C4 = Community Room
- CH = Chapel
- CY = Courtyard
- FH = Fellowship Hall
- LB = Lobby
- PC = Prayer Chapel
- WC = Worship Center

# THE SURVEY, REVISITED: WHAT STAFF & COUNCIL DISCOVERED

FROM THE VLC SURVEY 2026

## CHURCH SURVEY REPORT

Earlier this year, we asked you to do something simple but significant: tell us the truth about Victory. And you did. **613** of you took real time to fill out a long, thoughtful survey about our church — what you love, where you long to grow, and what makes it harder to connect. That is a remarkable act of trust, and we want you to know it did not disappear into a filing cabinet.

Our staff and church council recently spent a full morning together doing nothing but listening to your responses — reading them in your own words, looking for the themes that came up again and again. Last month, in May, we shared with you an overview report of the survey results and now we would like to share with you some thoughts and conclusions from this important meeting (you can check last month's report scanning the QR code on the bottom of this article). Here is what we found, and here is why it matters for where we are headed.

### FIRST: WHO ARE WE?

Before talking about change, we wanted to hear how you describe Victory as it is today. The same words rose to the surface across every service — Saturday evening, all three Sunday services, and online:

- A friendly, welcoming church
- Bible-based, faithful preaching
- Beautiful, traditional worship and excellent music
- Pastors and staff who care
- Strong classes, concerts, and small groups

In short: you told us that the heart of Victory — worship that honors God and teaching rooted in Scripture — is alive and well. That's worth pausing to celebrate. It also confirmed something encouraging:

**613 VOICES.  
ONE SHARED VISION.  
TOGETHER WE'RE SHAPING  
A FUTURE OF DEEPER FAITH,  
STRONGER COMMUNITY, AND  
GREATER BELONGING AT VICTORY.**



the way our congregation describes itself lines up closely with the vision our leadership has been pursuing. We're rowing in the same direction.

You were also wonderfully honest. Victory isn't perfect, and it isn't the right fit for every single person — and you said so. We received that not as criticism, but as a gift. A church that knows itself clearly, including its rough edges, is a healthy church.

### THEN: WHERE DO WE LONG TO GROW?

Woven through hundreds of responses were three clear longings. They weren't complaints — they were invitations.

**A deeper walk with Christ.** More than anything else, you expressed a hunger to grow spiritually — not just to add more activities, but to go deeper. Many of you asked for messages that feature life application — teaching you can live out during the week, more classes, and even recorded sessions to revisit. One response captured the whole spirit of it: "Spiritually thirsty."

At the same time, a healthy number of you said, in effect, "Don't change too much — we love what we have." We hear that too, and we take it seriously.



May 2026 Survey Report

# THE SURVEY, REVISITED: WHAT STAFF & COUNCIL DISCOVERED

FROM THE VLC SURVEY 2026

## CHURCH SURVEY REPORT

**Fuller access for everyone.** Some of you shared real, practical barriers to being here — parking that's far from the door, limited handicapped spaces, and difficulty hearing during worship. These things matter, because everyone should be able to take part fully in the life of Victory, whatever their mobility or hearing.

**Real belonging, not just friendliness.** This was a tender one. While "friendly" came up constantly, some of you also named that it can be hard to break in — that friendliness on the surface doesn't always become deep friendship. You're asking for genuine community, and that's a longing worth honoring.

### SO WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

From everything you shared, three commitments have come into focus — a picture of what we want to be true for every person at Victory.

Because Victory exists, our people should...

- ...*be growing in their faith and experiencing meaningful discipleship, not just attending services.*
- ...*be able to participate fully in the life of Victory — regardless of physical ability, hearing, or mobility challenges.*
- ...*experience genuine belonging at Victory, moving beyond surface-level friendliness into real community.*

Through the summer, our staff and ministry leaders are prayerfully working through what each of these means in practice. We don't want to rush out a list of new programs just to look busy. We want to move wisely, with a clear sense of purpose, in the areas you told us matter most. You'll be hearing more as this work takes shape later this year.

### THANK YOU

To the 613 of you who spoke up: thank you. Your honesty is already shaping the road ahead. And if you didn't get a chance this time — your voice still matters here, and there will be more opportunities to share it.

With gratitude,

The Pastors, Staff, and Church Council  
of Victory Lutheran Church



## A Gift Worth Giving: The Blessing of Funeral Preplanning

I remember the phone call like it was yesterday. My dad was gone, and in an instant, our family was swept into a grief we weren't prepared for. What I didn't expect was how quickly the practical demands of death would press in on us — even in those first raw hours of loss.

While we were still processing the shock, still reaching for one another in disbelief, the questions started coming. What kind of service did he want? Where? Who should speak? What songs meant something to him? What readings? What flowers? Each decision felt impossibly heavy because we were making them through tears, without a roadmap. My dad had shared a couple of wishes with my mom — that he wanted to be cremated and his ashes buried in a cemetery. And I'll tell you, even that small amount of guidance was an anchor in the storm. But the rest of us kids didn't know. It was a surprise to us, and in that moment of grief, even a loving surprise carries weight. We were grateful for what he had shared — and it made us realize just how much more we wished we had known.



That experience changed how I think about one of the most loving things any of us can do for the people we leave behind.

### A Final Act of Love

Preplanning your funeral isn't a morbid exercise — it's a profound gift. It's a way of saying to your children, your spouse, your family: *I love you too much to leave you guessing.*

Scripture speaks clearly about the wisdom of preparation. In Proverbs 21:5, we read, *"The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty."* There is a quiet dignity in thinking ahead, in ordering our affairs with care and intentionality. And Ecclesiastes 3:1-2 reminds us that *"there is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens — a time to be born and a time to die."* Death is not a surprise to God. We need not be surprised by it either.

The Apostle Paul, writing from prison and facing his own mortality, said with remarkable peace in Philippians 1:21, *"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."* That kind of confidence — rooted in the resurrection hope we share as believers — is exactly what allows us to talk about death without fear, and to prepare for it without dread.

When we preplan, we don't just spare our families from impossible decisions made in the fog of grief. We also get to tell our story one last time. We get to choose the hymns that carried us through hard seasons, the scriptures that anchored our faith, the words we want spoken over us as we are laid to rest. We get to make sure that our funeral service reflects not just who we were, but *whose* we were.

### It's Easier Than You Think

Here at Victory, we want to make this process as simple and meaningful as possible. We have put together a funeral planning packet that will walk you through everything step by step — guiding you through your wishes in a thoughtful and unhurried way, and giving your family the clarity and comfort they will need when the time comes.

Simply stop by the church office to pick up your packet. There is no pressure and no appointment needed — just take one home, fill it out at your own pace, and know that you have given your family one of the most loving gifts imaginable. I genuinely encourage every one of you to

take this step. Don't let your family face what mine faced — scrambling for answers while their hearts are breaking.

### A Hope That Anchors Everything

As Christians, we plan for our funerals from a place of hope, not fear. Jesus said in John 11:25-26, *"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die."* That promise changes everything. It means our funeral services are not just endings — they are declarations of faith, celebrations of a life lived in grace, and a testimony to a resurrection that is coming.

So plan well. Plan with hope. And give your family the gift of knowing exactly how to honor you when that day arrives.

**Funeral planning packets are available in the Welcome Center. Stop by anytime during office hours to pick yours up.**

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denton Bennet".

Denton Bennet, Associate Pastor



## GRIEF RECOVERY GROUP Mondays, 12:30-2:30pm

GriefShare is a program for help in your journey through grief after the death of a spouse, child, family member or friend. GriefShare is a special support group designed to help you rebuild your life after losing a loved one. Our group is led by caring people who have experienced grief and desire to help you through the difficult days ahead. We know it hurts and we want to help. Some of the topics covered include:

- Is This Normal?
- Grief and Relationships
- Why has this Happened?
- The Challenges of Grief
- Why Am I Stuck?
- Guilt & Anger
- And What Do I Live for Now?
- Complicating Factors

Video presentation and discussion. Each weekly session is designed to be "open," meaning a person can begin attending at any time. There is comfort, answers, and hope in every session! Consider a single session to learn about the program.

If you would like more information you can find more info about GriefShare on their website at [griefshare.org](http://griefshare.org) or you may contact: Suellen Palya at 480-325-3410 | [suellenpalya@yahoo.com](mailto:suellenpalya@yahoo.com)

Register online at: <https://find.griefshare.org/groups/290648>



## COLUMBARIUM MEMORIAL GARDEN

At Victory Lutheran Church, we understand the importance of honoring and cherishing the memory of those who have passed on.

Are you looking for a serene and beautiful final resting place for your loved ones' cremated remains? Our Columbarium offers a sanctuary of peace and serenity, providing a dignified space for reflection and remembrance. It is conveniently located on Victory's property, easily accessible to family members and friends who wish to pay their respects.

- A selection of "niches" for singles or couples; each includes a repository for ashes.
- Scattering of cremated remains in "Memorial Garden" with commemorative plaque.
- Memorial wall plaques are for those who may have plans elsewhere.

Brochures are available in the Welcome Center or you may contact the office at 480-830-5024 to discuss.



## A Story of Courage, Hope, and Resilience

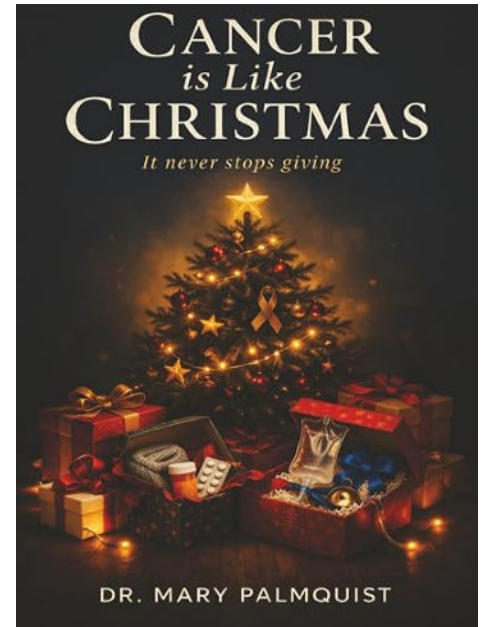
At Victory, we are blessed by the stories, faith, and witness of those who have walked through difficult seasons and still found ways to point others toward hope. One of those voices is Pastor David Palmquist's late wife, who wrote *Cancer Is Like Christmas, It Never Stops Giving*, a deeply personal and heartfelt reflection on the realities of living with cancer.

The title is both striking and meaningful. Cancer, like Christmas, keeps "giving," but the gifts it brings are not always welcome. It brings challenges, uncertainty, fear, and pain. Yet through this honest and moving book, readers are also invited to see how even the hardest seasons of life can reveal unexpected gifts: deeper gratitude, stronger relationships, meaningful moments, and a renewed awareness of what truly matters.

With courage, humor, and emotional honesty, the book explores the experience of diagnosis, treatment, waiting, weakness, and the impact cancer has not only on the person facing it, but also on family, friends, and caregivers. It does not pretend that cancer is easy or simple. Instead, it tells the truth about suffering while also making room for laughter, love, faith, and hope.

At its heart, *Cancer Is Like Christmas, It Never Stops Giving* is more than a book about illness. It is a story about resilience, perspective, and the strength God can provide in life's most difficult moments. It is a reminder to cherish the present, hold close the people we love, and look for grace even in places we never expected to find it.

A copy of the book is now available to read at the Welcome Desk. Please enjoy it there and leave the copy at the desk so others may also have the opportunity to read it. Those who would like their own copy may order one on Amazon using the QR code below or this link: <https://a.co/d/0eiWORlj>



### Women's Ministry Combined Bible Study Tuesday, July 14 @ 9:30am

During the summer months (May-September) Women's Ministry meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at Victory as a combined group. Pastor or Bible Study leader chooses the study.



### Quilters Group

Thank you to all the ladies that worked with us this quilting season. We accomplished much. We are now on break for the summer, but will be quilting again on September 15th from 8:30am-2:30pm and September 16th from 8:30am-11:30am. See you then!



### Food Pantry

The Food Pantry provides food boxes on Monday and Wednesdays from 9:00-11:30am.

**Leaving for the season?** Your unopened/non-perishable food and toiletry donations are welcome. Please drop them off in the brown bin near the front entry doors during office hours or during weekend worship.





# VICTORY CONNECTIONS

Connecting People. Enjoying Life. Growing Faith.

# JULY

## EVERYONE WELCOME! INVITE YOUR FRIENDS!

*Note: Deadlines to sign up for theater events are typically 2-5 weeks in advance in order to get group discounts and seating together.*

### This Month:

#### Bill Harrison (Arizona's "Road Scholar") Slideshow Presentation: Turquoise, Gem of Arizona (On Site)

**Wednesday, July 8, 2:00 pm, Victory Lutheran Church – Courtyard Chapel**

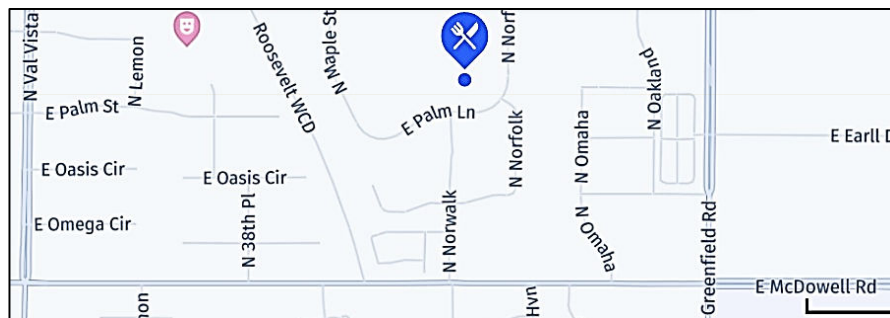
Hear the story of our state gemstone and how other cultures have used turquoise since ancient times. Visit famous Arizona turquoise mines, and learn how this gem is mined and processed. Get information on how to tell the real thing from fakes. ***Wear and bring your turquoise jewelry and other items for everyone to see and enjoy! Sign up & pay \$5 by Sunday, July 5<sup>th</sup>.***



#### Dinner at Board & Batten (Off Site – No Bus)

**Tuesday, July 14, 4:30 pm, 4012 E Palm St, Mesa**

**Sign up by Sunday, July 12<sup>th</sup>.**



North off McDowell,  
between Val Vista & Greenfield.

***Take a copy of the July flyer  
so you have this map!***

#### Feed My Starving Children (Off Site – FREE Bus)

**Wednesday, July 22, 1100 W Grove Parkway, Tempe**

**Packing Session 9:00-11:00 am (Bus leaves at 8:00 am)**

FMSC provides free children's meals distributed to schools, churches, orphanages and community centers around the world. Join us on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month at the Tempe packing facility – you can stand and package food, or sit and label it. **Sign up by Sunday, July 19<sup>th</sup>.**



### Next Month:

#### The Little Mermaid (Off Site – Bus Optional)

**Wednesday, August 5, 7:30 pm (Bus leaves at 6:30 pm)**

**Hale Centre Theatre, 50 W Page Ave, Gilbert**

Dive into a magical musical adventure about a headstrong mermaid who longs to be human. In a fateful bargain, she trades her voice for a pair of legs and a chance at true love. Featuring songs like "Under the Sea," "Part of Your World," and "Kiss the Girl." **Tickets are \$45; the bus (optional) is \$7. Sign up by Sunday, July 19<sup>th</sup>. \$45 without the bus, or \$52 with the bus.**



**NOTE: All theater tickets will be handed out on the bus or in the lobby of the event site.**



5946 E. University Drive  
Mesa, AZ 85205



**AMERICA 25<sup>th</sup>**

**CELEBRATORY SATURDAY SUNDAY 8:00**  
"Being a Christian"  
Freedom is a gift worth celebrating to remember well. As our nation independence, we gather with liberties we have received, mind and responsibility that  
\*The Sonoran Brass Choir music during our S

**PATRIOTIC POTLUCK**  
Sunday, July 5, 11am  
Join us as we celebrate American Independence with food, fellowship, and live music! We'll provide a selection of chilled beverages. Bring a favorite dish to share—hamburgers, hot dogs, grilled chicken, potato salad, coloslax, watermelon, vegetarian and gluten-free options, or a dessert are all welcome!  
Enjoy live entertainment from the **Sonoran Brass Quintet**, known for their rich brass sound and dynamic performances featuring patriotic favorites, classical music, jazz, and more.

**MOVIE MATINEE**  
Monday July 13, 9:30am  
We will be showing **A Great Awakening**, a film that invites us to reflect on faith, hope, and the ways God continues to work in the hearts of His people.  
This event is **FREE** and open to everyone. We hope to see you there!

5946 E. University D  
VictoryLutheran.i  
480-831

Pick up your 4th of July celebration Invite Cards!



**WORSHIP WITH US!**  
Saturdays 4pm  
Sundays 8am with Communion  
9:30am Traditional



**WATCH US LIVE @ 9:30am**

If you are unable to watch at that exact time, the service is available to watch on Facebook, YouTube and online at VictoryLutheran.com.

**NEED A DOSE OF DAILY HOPE?**

Subscribe to our daily devotional by texting the word **victory** to **888-897-5573**

**SUBSCRIBE TO WEEKLY EBLAST & MORE!**

Scan the QR code with your smart phone's camera and tap on the link.



Be sure to follow, like and subscribe to our channel

