VICTORY
LUTHERAN CHURCH

SPREAD THE WORD
December 2026





"Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations."
Psalm 90:1

Dear Victory Family,

As we come to the close of another year, I find myself looking back with gratitude. We have walked through change, welcomed new faces, said difficult goodbyes, and seen God continue to care for this church family. Through it all, the Lord has been our home—a steady place of grace, comfort, and hope.

Advent invites us to wait and watch for the God who comes near. In Jesus, God enters our anxious and wounded world to bring hope, peace, joy, and love. Then, at Christmas, we celebrate the wonder of that promise fulfilled: the Son of God came to live among us and make a home with us.

As we prepare to welcome Pastor Ryan, Ashley, Micah, and Jonah to Victory, I am thankful for the new ways God is guiding our life together. And as we look toward celebrating Victory's fiftieth anniversary next spring, we give thanks for all the ways God has sustained this congregation and look with hope toward what He will do among us next.

Thank you for the many ways you care for one another and share the love of Christ. I am grateful to serve as your pastor. May the hope of Advent and the joy of Christmas fill your hearts and carry you into the new year.

Merry Christmas, Victory family.

In Christ,

Pastor Todd Mathison

Todd Mathison, Lead Pastor
Ryan Barlow, Associate Pastor
Dirk Duhlstine, Chaplain

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

lcmc
Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ

God Makes His Home With Us —

Advent Communion, Christmas Concert, and Candlelight Worship

Christmas Helpers Needed

"Oh What Fun It Is"... to ***serve at Christmastime!*** Victory hosts five services on Christmas Eve at 1pm, 3pm, 5pm, 7pm, & 9pm, and one service on Christmas Day at 10am. Each year faithful volunteers greet people at the main door, usher at the worship center door, seat people, hand out candles, and many other things. If you would like to join in the fun, please **SIGN UP** at the red table in the lobby on December 5-6 or December 12-13.



Advent Communion | Wed, December 2, 4pm

In the midst of this busy, often stressful season, we invite you to pause and step out of the noise and lights of the world. Take time to reflect on the profound meaning of Jesus coming to earth as a child—the true Light of the World. Join us for a special communion service featuring the beloved **Holden Evening Prayer**. This is a beautiful opportunity to pray, sing, and center your heart on the gift of Christ, offered through the Christ Child.

Christmas Concert
Sunday, December 13, 3pm

Once Upon a Noel
VLC Choir, Soloists & Handbells

Celebrate the wonder and joy of Christmas with Once Upon a Noel, an inspiring afternoon of sacred music presented by the Victory Lutheran Church Choir & Bells, featuring choir, soloists, and instrumental ensemble. At the heart of the program is Camille Saint-Saëns' beloved Oratorio de Noël, Op. 12, a beautiful and moving retelling of the Christmas story through scripture and music. Rich melodies, expressive choral writing, and moments of quiet reflection bring the timeless story of Christ's birth to life.

The concert will also include a selection of cherished Christmas carols and seasonal favorites, inviting listeners to rejoice in the beauty, hope, and peace of the season. Whether through grand choral moments or familiar melodies that warm the heart, Once Upon a Noel offers a meaningful opportunity to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas and prepare for the coming of the Christ Child.



Christmas Eve Services | Thursday, December 24

This Christmas, celebrate the beautiful truth that God desires to be near us! Through Jesus, God came into our world to make His home among us. The greatest gift of Christmas is not something we receive or unwrap, but Someone we welcome—Jesus Himself. Join us for one of our Candlelight Christmas Eve services as we reflect on the wonder of God's presence with us. Each service will feature beloved Christmas carols, beautiful music, Scripture, and a thought-provoking reminder of the greatest story ever told.

Children are welcome at all services and will receive a special activity bag. Be sure to pick up invitation cards at the Welcome Center and share them with friends, family, and neighbors. Let's invite our community to find a home at Victory as we celebrate the God who makes His home with us!

Service Times:

1, 3, 5pm – Lessons & Carols with Choir, Organ & Strings

7pm – Communion with Handbells & Soloists

9pm– Christmas Vespers with Holden Evening Prayer



Christmas Day with Communion Friday, December 25, 10am

Celebrate Christmas Day with us as we gather around the Lord's table and rejoice in the promise of Immanuel—God with us! The child born in Bethlehem is the Savior who comes to meet us today. As we come forward to receive His body and blood, we are reminded that Christmas is more than a story of God coming near long ago. It is the living promise that He is with us here and now.

Join us as we celebrate the wonder of Christmas and the enduring presence of Immanuel. God is with us—not just in the manger, but also at His table and in our lives!



Invitation cards are available! Be sure to pick some up and invite a friend or neighbor. It's a simple yet meaningful way to reach out and welcome others to church.

SERMON SERIES:

GOD MAKES HIS HOME WITH US

Advent tells the story of the God who refuses to remain distant. In Jesus Christ, God comes to make His home among anxious, wounded, waiting people and to give them hope, peace, joy, and love. This sermon series reminds us that God has already come to dwell with us in Christ.



December 5 & 6

Peace Under One Roof — Luke 1:26-38

Mary receives a calling she could not control and a promise she could only trust. The Son she carries will make peace not by avoiding suffering, but by reconciling all things through His cross. Because Christ has made peace between God and sinners, His Church can become a place where divided and anxious people are welcomed, forgiven, and brought together.

December 12 & 13

Joy Comes Through The Door — Luke 1:39-55

When Mary enters Elizabeth's home, joy breaks out because the promised Savior is present. Biblical joy is deeper than cheerfulness; it is the glad confidence that God is keeping His promises in Christ. Victory is at its best when our life together helps people recognize that Jesus has come near and that His mercy reaches from generation to generation.

December 19 & 20 — Love Moves In — Matthew 1:18-25

Joseph's disrupted plans become part of God's saving plan as he receives Mary and names the Child Jesus. The love of God is not sentimental or distant; it moves toward us, bears our shame, and gives itself for our salvation. Because God has loved us first, our church home is called to make room for others with that same costly, welcoming love.

Christmas Eve, December 25 — No Room And Yet He Came — Luke 2:1-20

The Son of God is born where there is no proper room, laid in a manger, and announced first to shepherds on the margins. Christmas reveals the astonishing humility of God, who comes all the way down to save people who could never climb up to Him. In Jesus, sinners are no longer outsiders; they are welcomed home to God.

Christmas Day, December 25 (with Communion)

Love Came Down — John 3:16-21

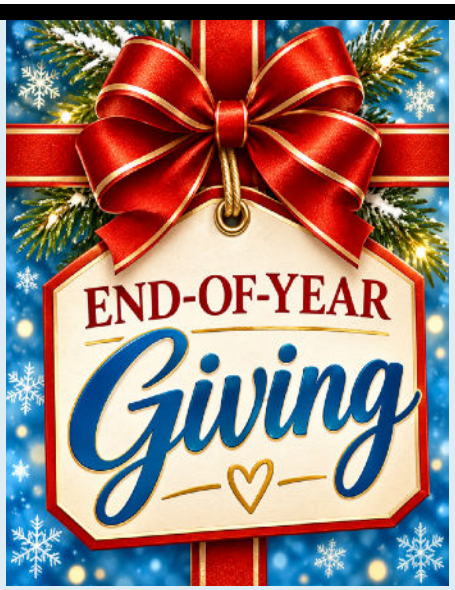
Christmas Day reveals the heart of the incarnation: God loved the world and gave His only Son, not to condemn us but to save us. The child of Bethlehem is the light who enters our darkness and gives eternal life to all who trust Him. Unlike Christmas Eve's emphasis on the manger scene, this sermon celebrates the Father's gift and the saving purpose for which Jesus came.

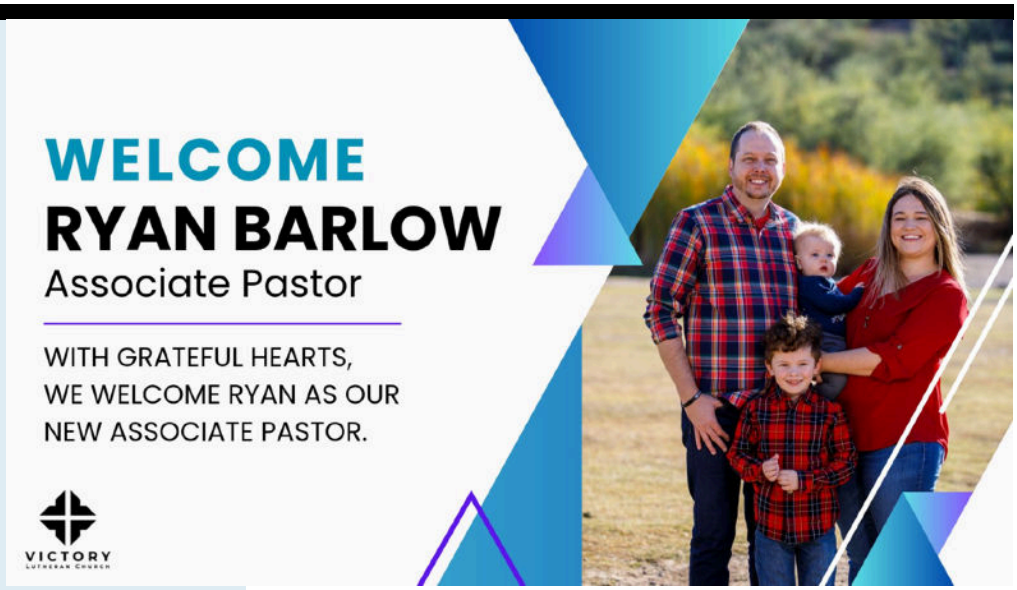
December 26 & 27 — The Word Made His Home Among Us — John 1:1-18

Guest Preacher, Rev. Chris Townsend

This weekend we welcome Pastor Chris Townsend who served at Victory as Associate Pastor in 2007.

Ten lepers receive mercy, but one turns back to give thanks at Jesus' feet. Before planning the next chapter, Victory pauses to remember how Christ has forgiven, sustained, and renewed His people through fifty years of change, loss, and new beginnings. Gratitude turns memory into trust because the Savior who has been faithful will complete the work He began.





Year-End Appeal
Generosity That Gives Thanks

"This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God."
2 Corinthians 9:12

Dear Victory Family,

As we come to the close of 2026, I've been reflecting on our recent conversations about generosity. Victory is a generous congregation—and when I say that, I mean you. You are a generous steward of all God has placed in your hands.

Through your faithful giving at Victory, God's love reaches beyond our walls. Your gifts support the worship, care, teaching, and outreach through which people encounter the hope of Jesus Christ. That is what the Apostle Paul describes: generosity meeting real needs and giving people reasons to thank God.

Would you prayerfully consider a year-end gift to support the ministry God is carrying out through Victory? Your generosity helps us continue serving our congregation, our neighbors, and our world in Jesus' name.

Thank you for the many ways you give—your time, your prayers, your care for one another, and your financial support. I'm grateful to serve alongside you, and I give thanks to God for the generous spirit of this church family.

With gratitude in Christ,

Pastor Todd Mathison

Scan QR code to give online!

Welcome
Pastor Ryan Barlow

"I thank my God every time I remember you."
Philippians 1:3 (NIV)

With grateful hearts, we welcome Ryan Barlow as Victory's new Associate Pastor. At our Annual Meeting on November 15, the congregation voted to call Ryan, and he has accepted. His first day will be December 7th, and his first weekend with us will be December 12-13, 2026.

I'm thankful for the many people who prayed and took part in this process. A special thank you to our Call Committee and Church Council for their thoughtful leadership throughout the search. Their care and commitment have helped bring us to this joyful moment.

As we welcome Ryan, we also warmly welcome his wife, Ashley, and their sons, Micah and Jonah. I hope you will join me in making them feel at home at Victory.

We give thanks to the Lord God for His provision and for the ways He continues to guide and sustain Victory's ministry. I look forward to serving alongside Ryan.

In Christ,

Pastor Todd Mathison

Pastor Todd Mathison



VICTORY IS TURNING 50 — Save the Date!

Sunday, January 24, 5:00pm

Mark your calendar for Victory's 50th Anniversary Gala & Dinner on January 24, from 5:00 to 7:00pm. It's an evening you won't want to miss! Tickets to reserve your spot will be available beginning January 2. We wanted to share the date now so you can save the evening.

In 2027, Victory Lutheran Church will celebrate 50 years of ministry—50 years of worship, service, fellowship, faith, and lives touched by God through this congregation. We know there are many stories over the last 50 years, and we want to hear yours! Please send it to:

hello@victorylutheran.com
Photos connected to your story are welcome, too!



Estate & Planned Giving Seminar

Sponsored by VLC Foundation

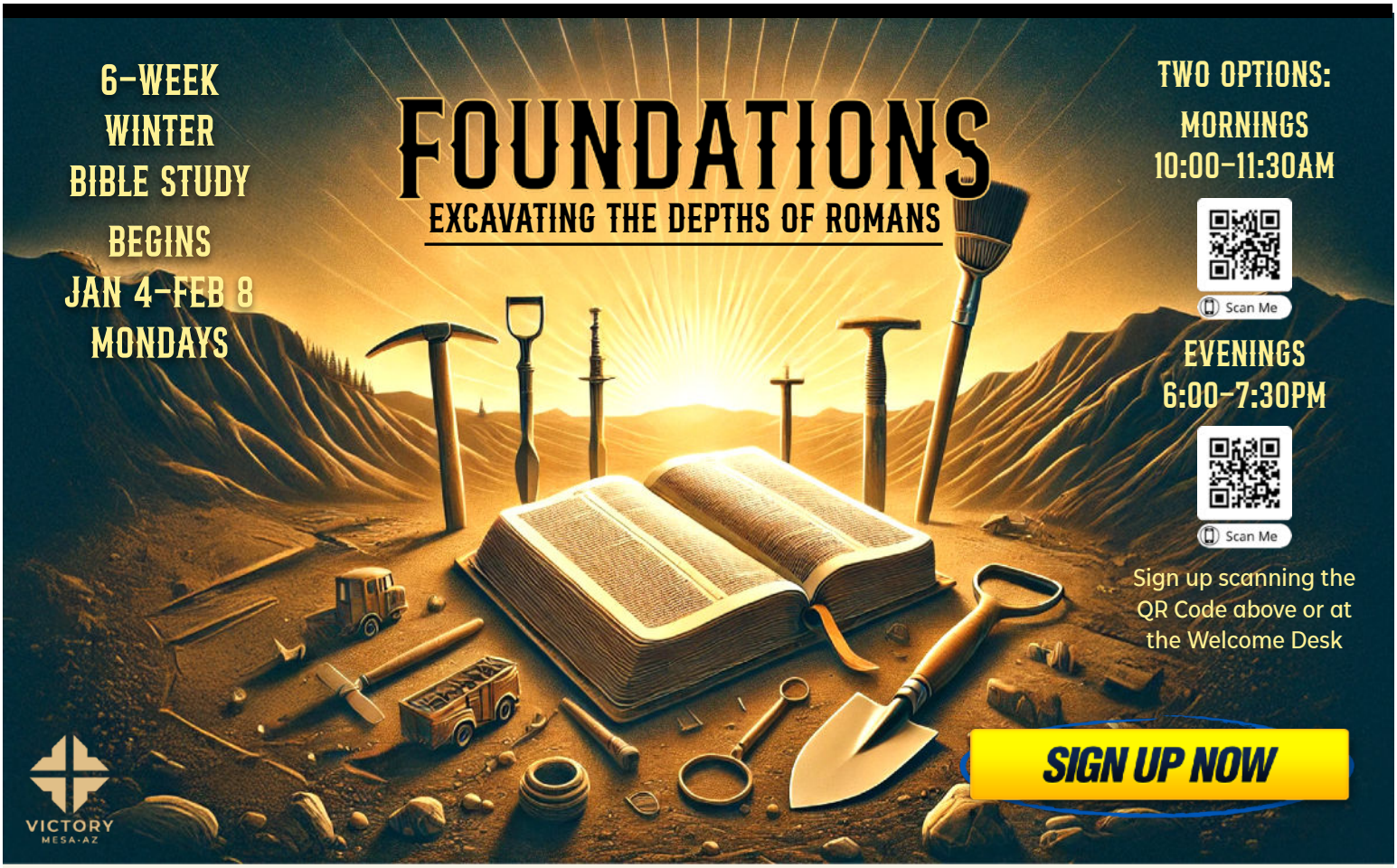
January 18 @ 1:30pm

Don't miss this opportunity to shape your legacy and leave a lasting impact! Our presenter, Mark Johnson, is recognized for his expertise in estate planning and charitable gifting. He has presented numerous Estate Planning Workshops in churches around the country and has been a featured speaker at many conferences. Learn about the different aspects of Estate Planning and why you should plan. As you delve into the intricacies of estate planning, you'll find a multitude of compelling reasons to secure your legacy:

- Biblical Perspective on Estate Planning
- Avoid Probate
- Reduce Estate Taxes
- Leave Gifts for Your Favorite Charity
- Individual Consulting Opportunity
- And Much More!

Sign up in the Welcome Center Victory Lutheran Church's Estate & Planned Giving Seminar!





Foundations of Our Faith: Romans, Part 2

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice..." (Romans 12:1)

That verse captures the heart of the second half of Romans. In chapters 9–11, the Apostle Paul reflects on God's faithfulness and mercy. Then, in chapters 12–16, he shows how that mercy shapes our lives: how we worship, serve our neighbors, live together in love, and hold on to hope in Christ.

Two years ago, we studied the first eight chapters of Romans and explored the good news of life in Christ. Now we're finally tackling the final eight chapters. I hope you'll join us as we keep learning from this remarkable letter and growing in the faith God gives us.

We will meet Mondays, January 4 through February 8, with sessions at 10:00am and 6:00pm. Sign up at the Welcome Center or online. I would love to study Romans with you!

Growing together in the mercy of Christ Jesus

Pastor Todd Mathison

Pastor Todd Mathison





Multiply Your Impact—Through Your IRA

"This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else."
~ 2 Corinthians 9:12–13 (NIV)

When the Apostle Paul wrote about the early church's ministry, he celebrated how their generosity was "making an impact around the world." The same can be said of Victory Lutheran Church today! Lives are being changed in the name of Jesus—not only here in Arizona, but across the globe through our mission partners.

Did you know?

If you're 70½ or older, you can make a gift of up to $100,000 per year directly from your IRA to Victory Lutheran Church—without paying income taxes on the gift. This gift can satisfy all or part of your **Required Minimum Distribution (RMD)** and allows you to see the impact of your generosity right now.

Even if you're not yet 70½, you can still bless the next generation by naming Victory Lutheran Church as a beneficiary of all or part of your IRA. Because Victory is a tax-exempt organization, your gift is received completely tax-free and continues to support Christ's mission for years to come.

Benefits of giving through your IRA:

- Avoid taxes on transfers up to $100,000 each year
- Satisfy your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD)
- Reduce your taxable income—even if you don't itemize
- Make a gift not subject to charitable deduction limits
- Leave a lasting legacy for Victory's ministry
- Available to donors age 70½ and older
- Must be completed before December 31



To make a gift or name Victory as a beneficiary:

- Contact your IRA administrator for a change-of-beneficiary form (or download one from their website).
- List Victory Lutheran Church, Mesa, Arizona, and the percentage or amount you'd like to designate.
- Return the form to your IRA administrator.
- Let us know! We want to ensure your charitable intent is carried out and thank you personally.

For more information about the many advantages of using your IRA to make a gift to Victory, please contact the church office at 480-830-5024 or email us at legacy@victorylutheran.com. Your generosity today helps shape Victory's ministry for generations to come.

Attendance / Offerings	2026	2025
Average Weekly Attendance (for month of November as of 22nd)	585	530
YTD Average Weekly Offerings (as of November 22, 2026)	$19,695	$18,034













VLC CONCERT SERIES

As Victory Lutheran Church marks its 50th Anniversary, our 2026-2027 Concert Series explores the themes of past, present, and future through inspiring performances by guest artists, local ensembles, and our own choir and handbell choirs. Join us as we honor our rich heritage, celebrate the blessings of today, and look forward with hope to God's continuing work among us.

For details visit: **victorylutheran.com/concert-series**

All concerts are at 3pm on Sundays and are followed by a reception. Invite a friend and celebrate this special anniversary season with us!



Scan Me

Don't miss a concert — subscribe!

DECEMBER 2026 VictoryLutheran.com

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
		1 6:30pm "Seekers" Small Group, B7 7pm AA Men's Meeting, C5	2 9-11:30am Food Pantry 10am Men's Bible Study, C1 12:30pm Al-Anon, C4 1-4pm Stephen Ministry Training, B12 1pm Bell Choir Rehearsal, WC **4pm Advent Communion Service, WC** 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal, WC 8pm AA Meeting, C5
6 **COMMUNION WEEKEND** 8:30-11am Coffee & Fellowship, FH 8am Worship & Communion, WC 9:30am Worship, WC	7 9-11:30am Food Pantry 12:30-2:30pm GriefShare, C4	8 11:30am Lunch at Cozy Corner (off-site) 5:30pm Christmas Lights Bus Tour 7pm AA Men's Meeting, C5	9 9-11:30am Food Pantry 10am Men's Bible Study, C1 12:30pm Al-Anon, C4 1pm Bell Choir Rehearsal, WC 1-4pm Stephen Ministry Training, B12 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal, WC 8pm AA Meeting, C5
13 8:30-11am Coffee & Fellowship, FH 8am Worship & Communion, WC 9:30am Worship, WC **3pm Christmas Concert, WC** 	14 9-11:30am Food Pantry 12:30-2:30pm GriefShare, C4	15 3pm Council Meeting, B7 5:30pm Christmas Lights Bus Tour 6:30pm "Seekers" Small Group, B7 7pm AA Men's Meeting, C5	16 9-11:30am Food Pantry 10am Men's Bible Study, C1 12:30pm Al-Anon, C4 1pm Bell Choir Rehearsal, WC 1-4pm Stephen Ministry Training, B12 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal, WC 8pm AA Meeting, C5
20 8:30-11am Coffee & Fellowship, FH 8am Worship & Communion, WC 9:30am Worship, WC	21 9-11:30am Food Pantry 12:30-2:30pm GriefShare, C4	22 7pm AA Men's Meeting, C5	23 9-11:30am Food Pantry 10am Men's Bible Study, C1 12:30pm Al-Anon, C4 1pm Bell Choir Rehearsal, WC 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal, WC 8pm AA Meeting, C5
27 8:30-11am Coffee & Fellowship, FH 8am Worship & Communion, WC 9:30am Worship, WC	28 **OFFICE CLOSED FOR THE WEEK >** 9-11:30am Food Pantry	29 **OFFICE CLOSED**	30 **OFFICE CLOSED** 9-11:30am Food Pantry

Office Hours: Mon-Thurs, 8am-4pm | 480-830-5024

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
3 9:30am Women's Ministry Board Meeting, C1 10am Prayer Group, B7 11am Al-Anon Meeting, C5 11:30am Stephen Ministry, C4 6pm Barleen's Show (off-site) Bus leaves at 5pm	4 OFFICE CLOSED	5 **COMMUNION WEEKEND** 8am Men's Bible Study, C5 4pm Worship, WC
10 10am Prayer Group, B7 11am Al-Anon Meeting, C5 5:30pm Christmas Lights Bus Tour	11 OFFICE CLOSED	12 8am Men's Bible Study, C5 **11am Annual Christmas Luncheon, FH** 4pm Worship, WC 
17 10am Prayer Group, B7 11am Al-Anon Meeting, C5 11:30am Stephen Ministry, C4 5:30pm Christmas Lights Bus Tour	18 OFFICE CLOSED	19 8am Men's Bible Study, C5 4pm Worship, W
24 **CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE** **1pm, 3pm, 5pm with Choir, WC** **7pm Communion with Handbells & Soloists, WC** **9pm Vespers with Holden Evening Prayer, WC** 	25 **10am Christmas Worship, WC** 	26 8am Men's Bible Study, C5 4pm Worship, WC
31 **OFFICE CLOSED**	1 - JANUARY **OFFICE CLOSED** 	19 8am Men's Bible Study, C5 4pm Worship, W

UPCOMING IN JANUARY

January 4-February 8
Romans Study
Mondays 10am & 6pm

January 11
Loss of Spouse, 12:30pm

January 12
Dementia/Alzheimer Care Partner Seminar, 1pm

January 7
Undecorate Church, 10am

January 18
Estate & Planned Giving Seminar, 1:30pm

January 19 & 20
Quilters, 8:30am

January 24
50th Gala Dinner, 5pm

January 26
Book Club, 1:30pm

Jan. 31 & Feb. 7
Discovering Victory, 12:15pm

SCAN ME

SUBSCRIBE
Weekly News Eblast

Subscribe to our weekly news and sermon link via email.

Send your request to kmichel@victorylutheran.com or scan the QR code.

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



ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Saturday, December 12, 11:00am

Joel Finnesgard, Guest Speaker

All of Victory is warmly invited to the Annual Christmas Luncheon on December 12th, as we come together to celebrate the birth of our Savior in a spirit of fellowship, worship, and giving!

This special gathering will feature guest speaker Joel Finnesgard, a seasoned trumpeter. This will be a time of celebrating Jesus' birth in a unique setting of instrumental music. There will be opportunity for audience singing. The music will include a blend of familiar Christmas carols, and a few new Christmas selections in an easy listening style. 1999 was the beginning of *Sound of the Trumpet* and as of April 2026 has come full circle after a season as *Stones Cry* (a family worship team). Joel and his wife, June, continue in the ministry traveling throughout much of this great country. More information and concert dates can be found at joelfinnesgard.com. A free-will offering will be received for *Sound of the Trumpet*.

In the spirit of global compassion, *Fair Trade* items will be available for purchase—perfect for meaningful Christmas gifts that support artisans around the world. And to add a touch of festive fun, we'll hold a raffle! If you feel led to contribute, we welcome donations of new or homemade gifts.

Tickets $15.00 on Sale thru December 6th. Catered lunch.

Sponsored by VLC Women's Ministry



SOUND of the TRUMPET
Joel Finnesgard



Operation Christmas Child 2026

A heartfelt **THANK YOU** to everyone who participated in Operation Christmas Child this year! Whether you packed a shoebox on your own, joined us at our packing party on November 14th, donated items or funds, or helped transport the boxes to the drop-off location, please know how much your generosity and willingness to serve are appreciated!

Together, our congregation packed **168 shoeboxes**, and our packing party added another **390 boxes**, for an amazing total of **558 shoeboxes**!

What happens next? The shoeboxes will now travel to the Operation Christmas Child Processing Center in Fullerton, California. There, each box will be carefully inspected to make sure it contains no prohibited items and is complete and ready to bless a child.

From there, the shoeboxes will be shipped to one of more than 100 countries around the world, where local churches will distribute them to children. Along with each shoebox, children will receive a copy of The Greatest Gift in their own language, sharing the wonderful message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

What a blessing to be part of something that reaches far beyond our own community! Each box represents love, hope, and an opportunity for a child to hear about God's greatest gift. Thank you for being the hands and feet of Jesus and helping share His love with children around the world! Your generosity is making a difference, one shoebox at a time.

Marcia Hurry
OCC Volunteer Coordinator





















Men's Breakfast Fellowship
Thursday, December 17 @ 7:00am

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." — Galatians 6:2

Life was never meant to be a solo mission. Every man needs a few good brothers in arms—men who will stand beside him, share life's challenges, offer encouragement, and point him back to Jesus Christ.

Victory's Men's Breakfast Fellowship is about just that. Good food, honest conversation, a few laughs, and friendships that go deeper than a handshake on Sunday morning.

New Schedule!
We meet 3rd Thursday of every month

Our next breakfast is Thursday, December 17, at 7:00am in the meeting room at IHOP, 10662 E. Southern Avenue, near Signal Butte.

No sign-up. No program. Just show up, enjoy breakfast, and take care of your own check. **Come hungry. Bring a friend. Because no man should walk alone.**



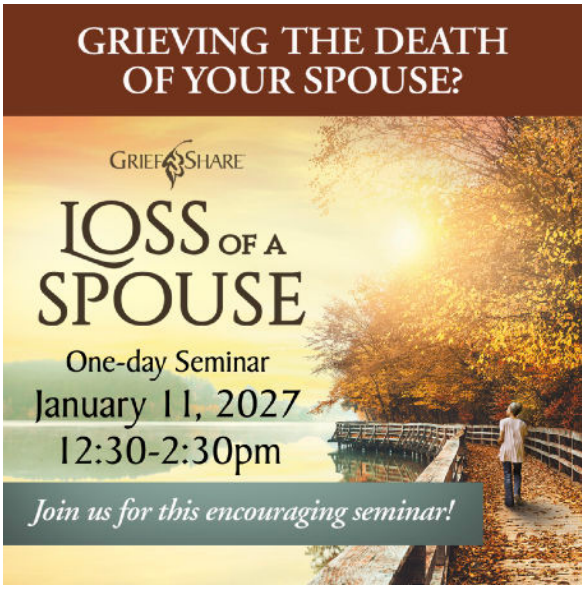
Quilters Group
December 15 & 16 @ 9am

Typically, the Quilters do NOT get together in December, but we have a need to do it this year. Our 'closet' desperately needs cleaning out and re-organizing. So, we are planning on getting together on Tuesday, December 15 and Wednesday December 16th to do just that. Starting at 9am in the Fellowship Hall each day and let's see how far we can get. Many things can be done from a sitting position and some not. BUT whatever help you can give, we would greatly appreciate. Come when you can - leave when you must.

If you have not quilted with us in the past, this is an opportunity to see what we do. We would love to have you join us in this ministry. In November we made 27 quilts but we distributed 60 quilts from those previously made.

Wishing everyone a Blessed Christmas!!

Co-Chairs:
Dottie Cisek 480-250-6668
Betty Swanson 480-234-4466



GriefShare®

"LOSS OF A SPOUSE"
1-Day Seminar
Monday, January 11, 12:30-2:30pm

Widowed? Help is here and hope is possible.

Do you dread the lonely days and nights? Wonder what to do with your spouse's belongings? Feel like your brain is in a fog? Unsure of how you'll go on?

At a Loss of a Spouse seminar you'll discover: other people understand and have found ways to make it through, why it won't always hurt so much, reasons for hope and practical tips for coping.



Session 1: January 12
Session 2: February 9
Session 3: March 16

Tuesdays
1:00pm
in the Courtyard Chapel

FREE

Dementia | Alzheimer Care Partner Seminar

Educational Series with Tools & Resources

Victory Lutheran Church is offering a powerful three-part series on Dementia Education!

Session One deals with brain changes that happen during the dementia journey. We will learn how dementia affects each area of the brain and how we, as caregivers, can work with the disease instead of against it.

Session Two deals with how we can learn to focus on what our loved ones can do and use that knowledge to make our caregiving journey easier and more fulfilling for us and our loved ones.

Session Three teaches us to master three techniques that will make our days go by faster and will help keep our loved one happy and entertained.

Each session also includes a question-and-answer section at the end of each seminar, and adult day care is provided should anyone have the need for it.

For more information about this seminar series contact Lynda Buechner at:
907-301-9779 or lyndabuechner@gmail.com

Register in the Welcome Center or Scan the QR Code

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5946 E. University Drive, Mesa, AZ 85205 | 480-830-5024

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Thanksgiving Eve Worship & Dinner - November 25, 2026















GIVE THANKS



















stephen MINISTRY®

NOT ALONE: CHRIST'S CARE THRU STEPHEN MINISTRY



A Burden Shared

Daily life can bring ongoing struggles that lead to a personal or spiritual crisis.

If you are walking through a difficult season, you don't have to carry the burden by yourself.

Overcoming the Barrier of Pride

Sometimes our own pride is what stops us from asking for help. It can feel difficult to admit when we are struggling, and we may believe we should be able to handle things on our own. Yet Scripture reminds us that we were created for relationship—not isolation.

When We Fear Being a Burden

At times, we don't ask for help because we don't want to be a burden or a bother to others. We may think, *"Everyone else is busy,"* or *"My problems aren't important enough."* But when we withhold our need, we may unintentionally rob others of the opportunity to fulfill part of their God-given calling.

God has asked His people to love one another, to bear one another's burdens, and to walk alongside those who are hurting. When we allow someone to care for us, we are not burdening them—we are inviting them to live out Christ's love. Reaching out is not a sign of weakness; it is an act of trust and obedience, stepping into the community God designed for us.



God never wants anyone to struggle alone. He created love and relationships so that we could encourage one another in the best of times—and especially in the most difficult seasons of life.

Common Struggles We Support

- Broken relationships and family conflicts
- The loss of a loved one
- A recent move or major life transition
- Chronic illness or a new medical diagnosis
- Other challenges that feel overwhelming

How Stephen Ministry Helps

- Christ-centered care: Ministers bring Christ's love directly into your life.
- Confidential care: Your conversations remain strictly private.
- One-to-one support: You are matched with a trained caregiver.
- Weekly meetings: Meet for about an hour each week.

The Role of Your Stephen Minister

- Listening with compassion to your thoughts and feelings.
- Encouraging you through difficult and uncertain days.
- Praying with you and for you.
- Offering faithful presence as they walk alongside you.

Take the First Step

If you—or someone you know—could benefit from the care of a Stephen Minister, please reach out to us today. You were never meant to walk this journey alone

Reach out to a pastor today or to:

Chaplain Dirk Duhlstine
dduhlstine@victorylutheran.com
480-660-5231

Daily Hope —A Simple Way to Share Encouragement

One of the blessings of ministry today is that encouragement can reach people far beyond the walls of our church. A short devotion, a Scripture verse, or a timely word of hope can meet someone right where they are — at home, at work, in a waiting room, or during a difficult season. At Victory, we have a simple and meaningful way to do just that. It is called **Daily Hope**.



Subscribe

Daily Hope is a short devotional message shared throughout the week to encourage faith, point people to Scripture, and remind us that God's promises are for everyday life. It is one of the ways Victory shares the good news of Jesus not only with our congregation, but also with friends, neighbors, family members, and anyone who may need encouragement.

In our church-wide survey, we learned that **33% of respondents were not familiar with Daily Hope**. That tells us we have a wonderful opportunity to make this ministry more visible and invite more people to receive it.

Subscribe by texting victory to 888-897-5573

And here is something simple to remember: **sharing is outreach**. When you forward a Daily Hope devotion, share a post, invite a friend to subscribe, or tell someone about something that encouraged you, you are helping the message of Christ reach another person.

Another meaningful way to support Victory's online outreach is by leaving a Google review. Many people look online before visiting a church for the first time. A kind review can help someone feel more comfortable taking that first step.

Scan the QR code or use the link below to leave a review, and consider sharing Daily Hope with someone who could use encouragement today.

Google Reviews ★★★★★

victorylutheran.com/review

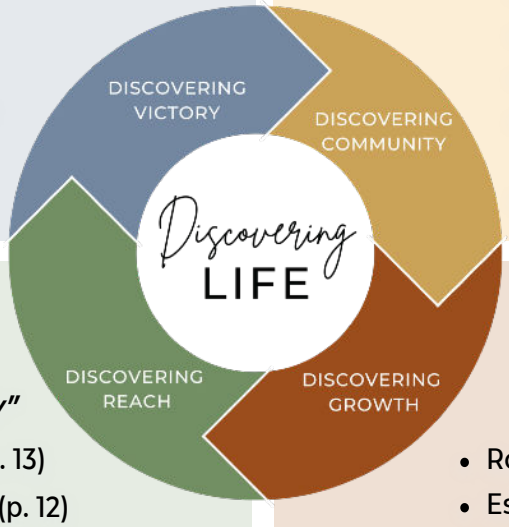
Scan the QR code above to leave a Google Review!

"Being transformed by our joyful and loving church"

- Sermon Series (p. 4)
- Concert Series (p. 2 & 9)
- Candlelight Christmas Eve Worship (p. 3)

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

- GriefShare Group (p. 14)
- Men's Breakfast Fellowship (p. 14)
- Quilters Group (p. 14)
- Dementia/Alzheimer Care Partner Seminar (p. 15)
- Victory Connections (p. 19)



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

- Operation Christmas Child (p. 13)
- Annual Christmas Luncheon (p. 12)
- Food Pantry

- Romans Study (p. 7)
- Estate & Planned Giving Seminar (p. 17)
- Daily Hope (p. 18)

VICTORY CONNECTIONS

Connecting People. Enjoying Life. Growing Faith.

DECEMBER

SINGLES & COUPLES WELCOME!
INVITE FAMILY & FRIENDS TOO!

NOTE: Deadlines to sign up for theater events are a few weeks in advance in order to get group discounts and seating together. Theater tickets are handed out on the bus or in the lobby of the event site.

This Month:

Barleen's Dinner & Home for the Holidays Show (Off Site – Bus Optional)
Thursday, December 3, Dinner 6:00 pm, Show 7:00 pm (Bus leaves at 5:00 pm)
2275 E Old West Highway, Apache Junction
Enjoy table service with an entrée of slow-roasted beef, plus mashed potatoes and gravy, carrots, salad, and Barleen's Famous Chocolate Cake. Libations available on individual tabs. After dinner, feel the magic of the holidays with a mix of traditional and popular seasonal classics in a festive show overflowing with warmth and joy! **(Tickets for this event are no longer available.)**

Lunch at Cozy Corner Cafe (Off Site – No Bus)
Tuesday, December 8, 11:30 am
5901 E McKellips Rd #102, Mesa (SW corner McKellips & Recker – between Kohl's & Fry's)
Great choices from both breakfast & lunch menus.
Sign up by Sunday, December 6th.

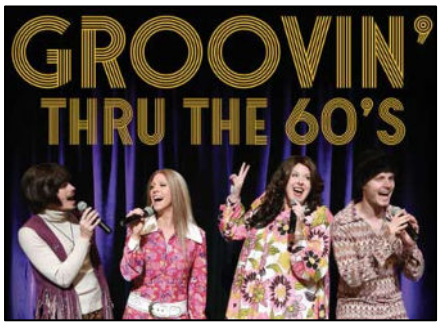
We meet on the 2nd Tuesday of each month to enjoy eating with friends at a local restaurant, alternating between lunch at 11:30 and dinner at 4:30.

Sunshine Acres – Crafts with Kids
No visit in December because of the Christmas holidays. Information about 2027 to come.

Feed My Starving Children
This activity is suspended in December for the Christmas holidays. We'll resume in January – on the 4th Wednesday of every month.

Next Month:

Groovin' Thru the 60's (Off Site – Bus)
Saturday, January 16, 2:00 PM (Bus leaves at 12:45 pm)
Queen Creek Performing Arts Center
22149 Ocotillo Rd, Queen Creek
Celebrate the greatest 60's folk rock hits of The Mamas & The Papas; Peter, Paul & Mary; Simon & Garfunkel and many more with such popular favorites as Blowin' In the Wind, California Dreamin', Puff the Magic Dragon, Monday, Monday, Mr. Tambourine Man, Bridge Over Troubled Water, & Sound of Silence. This show features four dynamic singers & live musical backup. **Sign up and pay $34 ($28/ticket + $6/bus) by Sunday, January 3rd.**



For more information or questions, contact Judy Bailey at 480-462-9521 or JudithMBailey@hotmail.com

VICTORY
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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