



First Presbyterian Church of Sun City, Arizona

Volume 58, May 2026

The Pastor's Corner

In my discoveries of the many church resources available these days, one especially meaningful site is the **Presbyterian Older Adult Ministry Network (POAMN)** at poamn.org. Their work reminds us that aging is not something to endure, but a journey to navigate with wisdom, humor, and grace that trusts in the goodness of our Creating and Re-Creating God. This past year, POAMN helped introduce me to a wonderful spiritual guide, the writer **Susan Abel Lieberman**. Her reflections on the later seasons of life blend lighthearted wit with honest realism. In her essay “Habit,” she celebrates the routines that keep us “awake to our bodies,” encouraging us to accept that we live with “used equipment that requires maintenance.” She comments further from her own first-hand experience: “Before sixty-five my body took care of me. Now, it demands I take care of it. Some weeks, it wants way too much time...!”

Her honesty is refreshing because it names something many of us know well: tending to our bodies, our spirits, and our health takes time, attention, and sometimes more patience than we feel we have. And yet, this caretaking—whether for ourselves, for a spouse, for a friend, (or most often, for everyone all at once) — is holy work.

A dear colleague once reframed the Great Commandment of Jesus in a way that has stayed with me: “**Love God. Love your neighbor. AND love yourself.**” Not as a hierarchy of priorities, but as an interwoven calling: we honor God when we care for the gift of our bodies. We love our neighbor when we extend grace for the days when life demands more of us. We love ourselves when we acknowledge our limits without shame.

The challenge, of course, is balance—finding the rhythm that allows us to serve, rest, laugh, pray, and keep going. Some weeks (or days, or hours) we manage it beautifully. Other times, not so much. Nevertheless, God meets us with compassion. May we continue to offer that blessed balance in this community of faith, hope, and love.

Want to learn more about the good work of POAMN? Visit: poamn.org



God Be With You

Blessings to David McMartin as he relocates back to Washington state. David demonstrated tremendous dedication as an exemplary caregiver for his mother, Mary. He also had a keen interest in our local Habitat for Humanity chapter, as well as serving in the tech booth for the video and audio aspects of our weekly worship services. We are grateful for the many ways David enriched our spiritual community . . . he will be missed!

Blessings to the ecumenical community here in the Sun City area, for the shared Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday services this year. Pictured are the ministers from the five participating congregations:



Wednesday Bible Study

We will be shifting gears for the season, starting on Wednesday, May 6th. Plan to attend a Caregiving Seminar (off site), carpool from Church Parking Lot at 8:30am. On May 13th at 10:00am, we'll have a "start of summer" planning session to discuss our May - September group plans.

Music Notes

THANK YOU to those participating in the music program at First Presbyterian, whether for a few songs or a season. We are thankful for the extra efforts of both the Vocal and Bell choirs during the Lenten and Easter season. We especially appreciate the tremendous support and leadership of director Bill Gleason, Mary Jo Meyer as accompanist for both groups and worship music leader, and Beth Mabee as volunteer Bell Choir Director.

On Sunday, May 3rd we look forward to having both the Bell and Vocal choirs enhance the worship service with their music. This will be the last Sunday in the program year for our singers, so we wish them a blessed summer break and look forward to their return in the new program year (end of September/early October).

Summer Is Coming... and So Is the Fun!

As the desert days stretch a little longer and the sun shines MUCH brighter, mark your calendars for a trio of cheerful gatherings to embrace the season:

Sunday, June 14th – Ice Cream Social (*Fellowship Hour*)

We're kicking things off with the universal language of joy: ice cream. Trade survival techniques with your summertime neighbors who will be braving the Arizona heat over scoops of frozen goodness.

Saturday, July 4th – Indoor Independence Day Picnic (*Noon*)

No need to shoo away birds or swat at the ants -- our Fourth of July celebration will be comfortably indoors in Swain Hall. Beginning at noon, we'll enjoy picnic faves and catching up with one another. Sign-up sheets for volunteers and diners will be available ahead of time. A freewill offering to offset the cost of the meal will be received tableside. By all means, feel free to wear your red, white and blue. Invite a friend!

Sunday, August 30th – Watermelonpalooza! (*Fellowship Hour*)

Yes, you read that right. We're closing out the season with an ode to the juiciest fruit of them all. Expect a variety of eatables featuring this versatile (and hydrating!) summer classic during fellowship time in Swain Hall (after worship).

A heartfelt thank you goes to our Congregational Care Team for organizing these special happenings. Their creativity and care help make our spiritual community feel like a great big hug.

Let's celebrate the season together—one scoop, one picnic plate, and one watermelon slice at a time.

Kevin Kline Window Washing

The church recently had our windows cleaned and what a difference it made! Kevin Kline Window Washing (480-688-1858) is the vendor that we used. He cleaned all of our windows inside and out, except for our stained glass windows, and he took off all of our screens and cleaned them as well before reinstalling them. We found the price to be reasonable and the workmanship outstanding. He is easy to work with and we would recommend him to anyone.

Notes from the Deacons

Due to supply issues and quality concerns, the Deacons are considering different options for Easter Flower tributes next year. We are also receiving input from our Sun City neighbors as we learn how they approach this tradition. If you have thoughts or concerns about this, please let one of your Deacons know: Betty Carr, Cheryl Moore, Mary Jo Meyer, Shellie Kooy, Dawn Nolan or Julia Whiteman.

Session Highlights

Current campus repairs include the Accessibility Buttons for the Swain Hall Door (on the inside and outside) to accommodate those needing assistance. Please note that this only is operational when the "crash bar" is hooked into the "open" position. Unfortunately, because of the age of the doors, the part necessary to fully repair the lock is taking some time to locate. Thank you for your patience as the locksmith company addresses this. In Personnel News, the search for a new pianist resumes after receiving the resignation of Sue Whittaker from that post on March 18th. Thankfully, Mary Jo Meyer is providing weekly service music on the piano -- please share your gratitude to her as she substitutes on a regular basis.

The last meeting of the **Prayer Shawls** group for the summer break will be **May 18th**.

2026 Easter Lily Tributes

Given by:

Stewart Porter

Pat Crnich

Bev Simmons

Jim & Janet McDonald

In Memory of:

My daughter Abby

Len and Doris Erickson &

John Crnich

Rex Simmons

In Honor of:

David Glenn Walker for all his contributions to the church for over 20 years!

CELEBRATIONS AND UPDATES

THIS MONTH'S BIRTHDAYS

We are celebrating you! Please join the Birthday Celebration May 3rd, in Swain Hall following the worship service.

- 05/03 Bonnie Law
- 05/19 Cheryl Davis
- 05/19 Janice Smith
- 05/24 Carol Maxwell
- 05/27 Terry Olthoff



For any additions/corrections to this birthday/anniversary lists, please let Laura know in the church office!



Church Triumphant Betty Shults



We received word that Betty Shults joined the Church Triumphant on April 9th, following a brief decline. She was a prolific artist, whose work was featured in local galleries, as well as being a person of deep faith. Per her wishes, no formal service of remembrance will be held. As we give thanks for her 95 years of life, we also hold her family and friends in prayer. Pictured below (right) is one of the many paintings that Betty created.





Join us:

**Saturday, May 2 at 10am
11406 N 80th Dr, Peoria, AZ
85345**



Celebrating families for:

- Lot #17001**
- Lot #23089**
- Lot #41054**
- Lot #41058**
- Lot #63049**

Dedication Ceremony

Celebrating the newest West Valley Homeowners!



QUESTIONS?

P: 602-232-1088
E: rsplillers@habitatcaz.org

Good Morning Church family!

Since this will be my last e-mail for this school year, I would like to thank all of you for your continued support of HART Pantry. Without all of the wonderful donors, HART could not provide food for the at-risk teens in our High Schools. They feel your love and thank you!



The Board met this week, and we are now planning for the 2026-2027 school year! The Pantry will be closed after Thursday, May 14th, for our summer break. Many of our volunteers go back to their hometowns to escape the hot summers and/or visit with family. The rest of us take smaller vacations or rest up for the end of July when we start up again.

So, at this time, we are not providing a wish list of items for Pantry. Soon our shelves will be empty, so in July I will provide a new list. You can all take a break for now!

In July, we will be looking for volunteers to help us keep our office open. We need someone on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, for light office duties. Hours could be from 9:00am to 11:00am or Noon. You would be answering incoming calls, checking missed after hour calls, light filing, stuffing envelopes, and accepting food donations that may be delivered. If you want to bring a book to read, write letters to friends, complete a puzzle or just get away from someone and have quiet time, that would be fine! So PLEASE see if you have some time to volunteer starting at the end of July. Also, you could be available one day a week, or one day every other week or once a month.

Oh, I almost forgot, we had a fun and successful Applebee's Pancake breakfast in April and thank you again for joining us and/or making a donation!

Enjoy your summer and we'll be back in July or August!

Mickey -Fundraising/Board Member

The Joy of Learning Class

April 24th was our final class until next September. We pray that you have a great summer, and we hope to see all of you when we gather again in September. I will have an exact September start date out to everyone in August. Thank you for your support of these classes. Respectfully, Terry K. Olthoff

FINANCIAL UPDATE

March 31, 2026

GENERAL FUND

	<i>Actual YTD</i>		<i>Budget YTD</i>
Contributions	\$29,609.00	Pledge Budget to Date	\$24,059.01
Other Income	9,573.29	Other Income Budget	9,999.99
Transfer from Foundation	<u>34,000.00</u>	Transfer from Foundation	<u>34,655.01</u>
<i>Total Income to Date</i>	<i>\$73,182.29</i>	<i>Budget to Date</i>	<i>\$68,714.01</i>
Expenses to Date	\$69,912.71	Expense Budget YTD	\$68,714.01

(Note: Expenses do not include Capital Improvements)

FOUNDATION FUNDS are currently \$1,541,003.24

(Interested in knowing more? Full reports are available in the church office. Volunteers are always welcome to serve on the financial leadership teams.)

Sunday Schedule:

9:30 am Worship Services in the Sanctuary
 10:30 am Coffee and Fellowship in Swain Hall.

Office Hours:

Tuesdays & Thursdays: 8:30am-3:00pm, Wednesdays: 8:30am-noon
 Mondays & Fridays: Closed



Church Staff

Pastor	Rev. Ann Utke	revannarizona@gmail.com Cell Phone (414) 708-7899 (Fridays Emergency only)
Office Manager	Laura Teadt	laurat@firstpressuncity.org
Finance Admin.	Sue Diaz	sued@firstpressuncity.org
Choir Director	Dr. William Gleason	billg@firstpressuncity.org
Pianist	Mary Jo Meyer	bjsshop@ncn.net

The SPIRE is published monthly by First Presbyterian Church of Sun City, AZ. Please call the church office at (623) 974-3605 to be added to our mailing list. Items to be included in the next edition of *The SPIRE* should be submitted to the church office or by email at laurat@firstpressuncity.org by **Monday, May 18, 2026**.