

COMMUNITY CHURCH *of the Verdes*

February 22, 2026



ORDER OF WORSHIP

Time for Centering

Lenten Sermon Series Begins

“I AM” — The Self-Revelation of Jesus

As we enter the season of Lent, we begin a new sermon series exploring the powerful “I AM” statements of Jesus in the Gospel of John. Throughout Lent, we will listen closely as Jesus reveals his identity—Bread of Life, Light of the World, Good Shepherd, True Vine—and discover what these claims mean for our lives today.

This Sunday we begin with one of the most profound and provocative statements Jesus ever made:

“Before Abraham was, I AM.” (John 8:58)

With these words, Jesus does more than speak about pre-existence. He reaches back to the divine name revealed to Moses at the burning bush and claims for himself the very identity of the living God. It is a statement that stunned his hearers—and still confronts us today.

Who is this Jesus?

Is he merely a teacher from Nazareth?

Or is he the eternal “I AM” who stands outside of time, yet enters our story for our salvation?

This morning we begin this Lenten journey, listening again to the voice of Christ and asking what it means to trust the One who says, “I AM.”

Order of Worship

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Introit *Come and Find the Quiet Center* #575

Call to Worship

Pastor: *Return to the Lord your God, for God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.*

People: ***We come seeking mercy. We come longing for grace.***

Pastor: *Create in us clean hearts, O God, and put a new and right spirit within us.*

People: ***Restore to us the joy of your salvation, and sustain us with your Spirit.***

Pastor: *Let us worship God.*

**Hymn of Praise* *God of Grace and God of Glory* #464

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession (spoken in unison)

O God of Love, You are ever with us, upholding and guiding us. Yet we are so inclined to wander far from You. The more we wander, the more desperate we become for the joy and peace of Your presence. We pray that You would seek us in our loneliness, and that You would find us in our hiding places. Then, in Your mercy, grant us Your forgiveness. Gather us back into Your fold and set our feet upon Your paths, in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Silent Confession

Prayer Response *Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus*

Turn your eyes upon Jesus, Look full in His wonderful face, wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim In the light of His glory and grace.

*Please stand as you are able

Assurance of Pardon

**Congregational Response Gloria Patri #35*

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

**Passing of the Peace*

Call to Offering

Offertory From the Rising to the Setting of the Sun (Lantz)

**Doxology Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow #46*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host: Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

**Prayer of Dedication*

Pastoral Prayer and Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Scripture John 8:51-59

⁵¹ Very truly, I tell you, whoever keeps my word will never see death.” ⁵² The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, and so did the prophets, yet you say, ‘Whoever keeps my word will never taste death.’ ⁵³ Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets also died. Who do you claim to be?” ⁵⁴ Jesus answered, “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, he of whom you say, ‘He is our God,’ ⁵⁵ though you do not know him. But I know him; if I would say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him, and I keep his word. ⁵⁶ Your ancestor Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day; he saw it and was glad.” ⁵⁷ Then the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” ⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am.” ⁵⁹ So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

Leader: *The Word of the Lord.*
People: *Thanks be to God.*

Anthem *You Alone Are God* (McDonald)

Sermon *"Before Abraham was, I am"*

Time of Reflection

***Closing Hymn** *Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty* #4

Charge and Benediction

***Closing Response** *God, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing* #439

***Postlude**

Music for today's worship includes:

Prelude: Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun (Hatton), My Song Is Love Unknown (Wood), Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty (arr. Berry)

Time of Reflection: Give Me Jesus (arr. Hayes)

Postlude: O, How I Love Jesus (#99)

Volunteers assisting with worship today:

Communion Table: Rockee Coalson

Badge Table: Sue & Patrick Walsh

Fellowship: Sue Cole, Illa Alexander and Rockee Coalson

Flower Committee: Sharon Severson, Jennifer Ristau, Linda Paulos, Deb Barth

Lector: Rockee Coalson

Tellers: Jan Stegmann and Judy Dorwart

Ushers: Bill Hickman, Darrel & Rhonda Brenner

Road Signs: Bill Hickman and Ric Doerflinger

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome members and guests! If you are visiting for the first time, please stop by our badge table for a welcome gift. Visit our website www.verdefaith.org for additional information. **Please complete the Fellowship Pad** at the end of each pew; pass it along, and back. **Fellowship is held following worship** in Founders Hall.

Attendance at last Sunday's service was 267; 192 joined online.

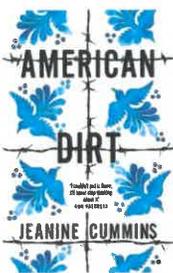
Today's flowers were donated by: Carol Horonzy.

Stephen Ministers are trained, ready to listen, care, encourage, pray, and help through a crisis or difficult time. Contact one of our leaders, Donna Angiolillo, Glenda Hage, Debbie Etcheson, John Pasnau, Dan or Judy Villanueva.

In need of prayers for you, your family, or friends? Contact Joan Brunner at 480-471-7274, or Pastor Steve with requests, or if you would like to serve on the team.

AA meetings are held weekly on Mondays at 8:00am in the library.

PAL (Parents of Addicted Loved Ones) meetings are held every other Tuesday at 6:30 pm in the library. Next meeting is February 24th. Questions? Contact Greg & Weezy Smith at lift5800@gmail.com.



SPIRITUAL THEME IN LITERATURE

The Spiritual Theme in Literature book discussion will be led by Winnie Leathers. The Book Club meets the second Thursday of each month in the Library @ 10:00am. The book for **March**-American Dirt by Jeanine Cummins; **April**-Crying in the H Mart by Michelle Zauner; **May** - Before We Were Yours by Lisa Wingate. All are welcome.

BIBLE STUDY



Wednesday at 11:00am Bible study: The Lord's Prayer with Pastor Steve is held in Founders' Hall. All are welcome.

Thursday Bible study with Ed Carpenter is held in Founders' Hall at 7:30am and 4:00pm. Both sessions are covering the same material. The subject is the Gospel of John. All are welcome.

New Bible Study Begins Ash Wednesday: *The Seven Deadly Sins*

Beginning on February 18th (Ash Wednesday), Pastor Steve will lead a 6-week Lenten Bible study exploring the seven deadly sins—not as a list for shame, but as a spiritual diagnosis that names the habits and desires that distort our love of God and neighbor. Rooted in Scripture and the wisdom of the Christian tradition, the study invites honest self-examination, repentance, and the hope of transformation. The study meets Wednesdays at **11:00 a.m. in Founders Hall** and is open to all.

Lent is a season for truth telling and grace; this study is an invitation to slow down, look within, and discover how God meets us not with condemnation, but with mercy and new life.

GRIEF SUPPORT/SHARE GROUP

Open to all. Our Grief Support and Share Group meets every Thursday until March 12th. We will be meeting in the library from 3pm—4:30pm. If you have any questions, please contact Donna Angiolillo at 845-416-3445.

MEMBERSHIP

Interested in Membership? Come to the **Q and A session on March 1** in the library after the service.

MISSIONS

-  **Lunch making and delivery for Justa Center:** The third Thursday of the month at 9:00am
-  **FHCMA Food Closet:** toothpaste, canned fruit, Saltine, and Ritz crackers
-  **Extended Hands Food Bank:** non-perishable food items
-  **Pad Project Ministry:** Monday's at 1:00pm
-  **Prayer Shawl Ministry:** 2nd Friday of the month @ 9:00am

FEBRUARY MISSION DRIVE

SUNSHINE ACRES



This month, we are collecting items for Sunshine Acres. They provide a loving, Christian home to children separated from their parents to prepare them for a successful life. Please help by donating:

- Kids snacks
- Toothpaste and toothbrushes
- Individual hand soap bars

Items can be placed in the Blue Bin in the Narthex or in the church office doorway. Thank you!

THRIVE AZ TOUR

TUESDAY, MARCH 3rd at 11 o'clock

Join church members and guests on a tour of Thrive AZ's satellite location where their young adults learn business skills operating their Grounds to Thrive Coffee Shop and Thrift to Thrive Shop.



The address is: 839 E. Camelback Road, Phoenix

On the tour, we will meet Thrive's President and CEO, Steve Vogel, who will talk about their foster care prevention and family reunification work.

Please register on the website and indicate your transportation preferences. For questions, contact Nancy Lowe at ntart94@gmail.com or 203-395-9872.

OPERATING FUND

**YTD Actual contributions
through February 15 were
\$114,101**

**YTD Budgeted contributions
through February 15 were
\$96,250**



Support CCV Ministries & Missions with Online Giving

Thank you for your continuing support!

Please consider these other funds open to special giving in your estate planning...

Legacy Endowment Fund – current balance \$390,481

The purpose of the Endowment Fund is to expand and enrich the mission of the congregation, to initiate new ministries or significantly change the scope of existing ministries. No more than 5% of the three year average fund assets may be distributed in any one year.

Memorial Garden Fund – current balance \$485,367

The purpose of the Memorial Garden Fund is to provide for the perpetual operation and maintenance of the Memorial Garden. Established in 1990, the Memorial Garden provides a resting place for the interment of the ashes of loved ones. It is open to current and former members and residents of Rio and Tonto Verde.

Scholarship Fund – current balance \$23,653

The Scholarship Fund promotes scholarships among young people involved in institutions we support through Mission giving. Recipients are chosen from applicants who are demonstrating academic excellence, commitment, and service in or to one of the following non-profit institutions or community: Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), NPH (formerly Friends of the Orphans), Sunshine Acres. The Scholarship Fund's sole support is contributions from our members. Donors cannot be related to recipients.

Did you know?... If you are age 70 1/2 or older, you can make a gift from your IRA to support the church. It will not add to your federal taxable income; It counts toward your required minimum distribution, and allows you to experience a tax benefit, even if you do not itemize deductions. You should discuss any such gifts, before making them, with your financial advisor.

The church is very appreciative of gifts from trusts, foundations, and stocks. Occasionally, these gifts are received with no indication of who the donor is. So that we may properly recognize and record the gift, we ask that you either notify the church office or have your financial representative document the donor {and intent} when it is sent to us.

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Monday, February 23

8:00am AA Meeting (Library)
9:00am Community Prayer w/ Pastor Steve (Chapel)
10:00am Fellowship Meeting (Library)
1:00pm Pad Project (Sunday School Room)
2:00pm Performing Arts Meeting (library)
4:00pm Lecture: Choose Joy w/ Babs Plunkett (Sanctuary)

Tuesday, February 24

9:00am Community Prayer w/Pastor Steve (Chapel)
4:00pm ASU Lecture (Sanctuary)
4:30pm Weekly Rosary St. Dominic (Chapel)
6:30pm PAL Meeting (library)

Wednesday, February 25

9:00am Community Prayer w/ Pastor Steve
10:00am St. Dominic Bible Study (Chapel)
11:00am Bible Study: The Seven Deadly Sins w/ Pastor Steve (Founders Hall)
4:00pm Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, February 26

7:30am Bible Study w/ Ed Carpenter (Founders Hall)
9:00am Community Prayer w/ Pastor Steve (Chapel)
3:00pm Grief Support Group (Library)
4:00pm Bible Study w/ Ed Carpenter (Founders Hall)

Friday, February 27

9:00am Community Prayer w/ Pastor Steve (Chapel)
5:00pm Stations of the Cross St. Dominic (Courtyard)

Saturday, February 28

9:45am St. Dominic Centering Prayer (Chapel)

Sunday, March 1

8:30am Worship Service (Sanctuary)
9:30am Fellowship (Founders Hall)
10:00am St. Dominic (Sanctuary)

TOMORROW!

BABS PLUNKETT

“Choose Joy:

Three Keys to Investing Your Time in Retirement”

Monday February 23, 2026 @ 4:00pm

Meet Babs!

“I am a passionate advocate for positive aging and joyful living. To help myself and others live joyfully, I became a Life Coach and Certified Professional Retirement Coach. As the author of the best-selling *Choose Joy: Three Keys to Investing Your Time in Retirement*, I interviewed over 100 people across the country, gaining their inspiration and insights on how to live with joyful purpose.” The interviews led Babs to discover that aging well is a choice; that joy is something we can choose.

Curious about how to invest your time with joy and meaning?

Join us for this free presentation!



CRYSTAL STARK

COMING MARCH 13TH

Tina Turner, Carole King, Aretha Franklin, Dolly Parton, Ella Fitzgerald, Whitney Houston... all of these artists have taken the stage and the world by storm with their powerful voices and incredible determination. Crystal Stark, an **American Idol Finalist** and vocal powerhouse in her own right, pays tribute to these First Ladies of Song with tunes that will make you laugh, smile, cry, and appreciate the fortitude of those fierce female firsts. You won't want this show to end.

****tickets on sale now in the office during normal business hours or at the door on the day of the concert.**

1. God of grace and God of glo - ry, on thy peo - ple
 2. Lo! the hosts of e - vil round us scorn thy Christ, as -
 3. Cure thy chil - dren's war - ring mad - ness; bend our pride to
 4. Set our feet on loft - y pla - ces; fill our lives that
 5. Save us from weak res - ig - na - tion to the e - vils

1. pour thy power; crown thine an - cient church - 's sto - ry;
 2. sail thy ways! From the fears that long have bound us,
 3. thy con - trol; shame our wan - ton, self - ish glad - ness,
 4. we may be strength - ened with all Christ - like gra - ces
 5. we de - plore; let the search for thy sal - va - tion

1. bring its bud to glo - rious flower. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 2. free our hearts to faith and praise. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 3. rich in things and poor in soul. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 4. pledged to set all cap - tives free. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 5. be our glo - ry ev - er - more. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,

1. for the fac - ing of this hour, for the fac - ing of this hour.
 2. for the liv - ing of these days, for the liv - ing of these days.
 3. lest we miss thy righ - teous goal, lest we miss thy righ - teous goal.
 4. lest we fail our call from thee, lest we fail our call from thee.
 5. serv - ing thee whom we a - dore, serv - ing thee whom we a - dore.

WORDS: Harry Emerson Fosdick, 1930
 MUSIC: John Hughes, 1907

CWM RHONDDA
 87.87.877

Alt. tune: REGENT SQUARE

4 Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!

Descant

4. Ho - ly, God Al - might - y!

1. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Lord God Al - might - y!
 2. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! all the saints a - dore thee;
 3. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! though the dark - ness hide thee,
 4. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Lord God Al - might - y!

Thy works praise thee in earth and sky and sea;

Ear - ly in the morn - ing our song shall rise to thee;
 cast - ing down their gold - en crowns a - round the glass - y sea;
 though the sin - ful hu - man eye thy glo - ry may not see;
 All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea;

God most ho - ly, mer - ci - ful and might - y!

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Mer - ci - ful and might - y,
 cher - u - bim and ser - a - phim fall - ing down be - fore thee,
 on - ly thou art ho - ly; there is none be - side thee,
 ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Mer - ci - ful and might - y;

WORDS: Reginald Heber, 1826, alt.

MUSIC: John B. Dykes, 1861; desc. O. I. Cricket Harrison, 1994

NICAEA
11.12.12.10



Vision Statement

To be a Christ centered church that inspires individuals to grow closer to God and to serve others with loving and compassionate hearts.

Faith Statement ~ The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

***Community Church of the Verdes
25603 Danny Lane, Suite 1
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Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 9:00am-2:00pm
Friday – 9:00am – 12:00pm
Telephone: (480) 471-7239
www.verdefaith.org***

***Pastor: Rev. Stephen Beard
Pastor's cell: (732)546-5332
Pastor's email: sbeard@verdefaith.org
Director of Music: Tom Wojtas
Office Manager: Tami Burke***

***A/V Operator: Skyler Evans
Vocalists: Debby Wojtas, Jeffrey Stevens, Sara Bruton***

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Affiliated with the International Council of Community Churches



We are a Stephen Ministry Congregation



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