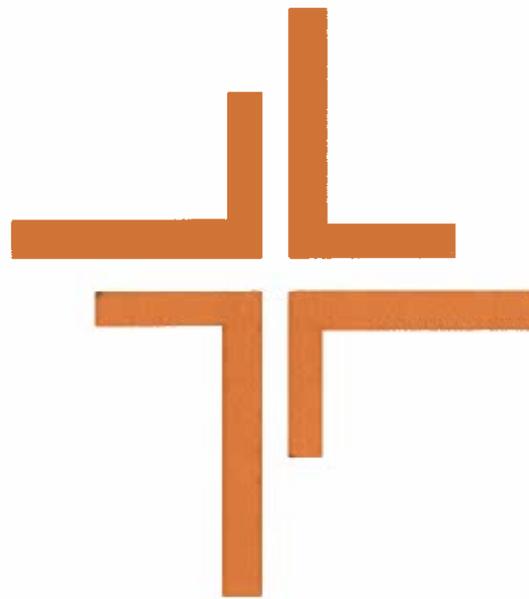


Annual Report 2025



SHARING – LOVING – SERVING

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
SUNDAY February 22, 2026
1:00 P.M.

Desert Cross Lutheran Church

www.desertcross.org
480-730-8600

Desert Cross Tempe
8600 South McClintock Drive
Tempe, Arizona 85284

Desert Cross Gilbert
3225 S. Lindsay Rd, Suite 101
Gilbert, Arizona 85297

THE CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

January 1, 2025 – May 19, 2025

Council

Anna Sion	President
Vicki English	Vice President
Brent Borchers	Treasurer
Marie Ihlefeld	Secretary
Angela Nannenga	Past President
Adam Clark	
Carolyn Perkins	
Gail Dempsey	
Mari Johnson	
Vacant	
Pastor Andrea Cain	
Pastor Thadd Book	

May 19, 2025 – December 31, 2025

Council

Vicki English	President
Mary Beth LaMont	Vice President
Brent Borchers	Treasurer
Marie Ihlefeld	Secretary
Anna Sion	Past President
Sue Eberle	
Tony Tainter	
Mark Farrell	
Gail Dempsey	
Mari Johnson	
Pastor Andrea Cain	
Pastor Thadd Book	

Staff

Senior Pastor*	Rev. Andrea L. Cain
Associate Pastor*	Rev. Thaddeus M. Book
Director of Operations and Property*	Douglas W. Bjotvedt
Office Administrator	Wendy Williamson
Accountant	Deanna Soll
Director of Worship and Media Arts*	Johannes Van Rossum
Sound Technician	Shelby Watts
Worship Associate	Christine Soll
Worship Coordinator	Arthur Krzyzewski
Director of Adult Ministries*	Denise McClellan
Director of Youth Ministries	Tessa Faust
Director of Children's Ministries*	Shannon Fossett
Children's Ministry Assistant	Ariane Nannenga
Parish Nurse	Denise Viker, R.N.

*Full-time

Mission Statement

As a **Missional** Congregation,
we **celebrate** Christ's presence,
invite people into a growing relationship with Jesus,
and **equip** them to **serve** in a broken world.

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Senior Pastor

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 2 Corinthians 5:17

It was amazing to see God working through the people of Desert Cross in 2025. Jesus encouraged us to shed the old and to welcome the new, and it was a banner year of change, growth, renewed energy, and momentum at Desert Cross! We made some major changes to our staffing and worship area, and the results have been encouraging with more volunteer participation, more children attending and participating, lots of returning visitors, and new members from all across the globe. A lot has changed since I arrived to serve Desert Cross in 2014, and I can attest that God is certainly doing something new with Desert Cross! It is a privilege to accompany you on this journey of faith and life, and I give thanks for each of you.

I hope that you see the blessings God is granting even amid national and global difficulties. We see God working and the Spirit moving at Desert Cross not only in the renewed energy and growth, but in the new mission opportunities like becoming a new Borderlands Produce Rescue distribution site in 2025!

A faithful nonagenarian church member shared with me a life lesson: Don't look back but look forward in hope; you can't change the past, but you can make the future better. Our faith teaches us that in Christ we are a new creation. So as we look ahead to 2026, we make way for new perspectives and new beginnings. Past conversations, mistakes, and understandings don't define the future. In Christ we have forgiveness = a daily fresh start to bring new ideas, insights, and perspectives that usher in hope.

I set our 2026 weekly staff theme as "What is giving me Hope." At every staff meeting, we each share what is giving us hope in the moment. Where do you see the possibilities of fresh starts and hope for 2026? The people of Desert Cross give me hope each week in all the ways you generously share yourselves in mission, service, and fellowship. Thank you for all you do to serve God through our faith community. When we come together for good, God can do amazing things through us to heal, feed, and give hope to people in our community and world! I can't wait to see what new things God will do with us in 2026!

Looking forward,

Pastor Andrea

Rev. Andrea L. Cain

PASTORAL MEMBERSHIP RECORDS AND STATISTICS

Members Received

Transferred to DCLC from other ELCA Churches (3)

Trudy Hermann Lisa Sampson Ann Keil

Transferred to DCLC from other Lutheran Churches (3)

Phil & Carla Pomeroy Laurie Llanas

Transferred to DCLC from other Churches (3)

Lori Shipley Andy & Milly Potter

Members Received by Affirmation of Baptism (25)

Sonia Barber	Camille Irwin	Ashley Larson
Juliet Jacob	Stephania & Pauline Ngonyani	Cevin & Sue Petersen
Troy Clark	Andy, Cara, Emily & Faith Shearer	Roxanne Heiden
Victoria Bitrus Ali	Aishatu, Magabe, Lady, & Dauda Ali	Alan & Kim Maag
Ben & Amanda Oster	Dave & Dianne Quashnie	

Members Received as an Associate

Members Received by Adult Baptism

Members Received by Child Baptism (10)

Charley Winter Emery	Olivia Noelle Avena	Abigail Jean Reeves
Lia Alayna Reeves	Charlie Michael McClellan	Elliot Chad McClellan
George Benjamin English	Piper Lynn Baney	Evie Josephina Baney
Diego Jose Rojas II		

Affirmation of Baptism

Weddings (*Denotes non-members)

Membership	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Baptized	763	735	755	769	788
Confirmed	634	614	618	624	649
Households	384	369	370	362	360

Associate Pastor

Greetings!

As I reflect on 2025, the word that comes to mind is enthusiasm. There has been a noticeable energy in our life together. A willingness to step forward, to participate, and to say yes to what God is doing among us.

We've seen that enthusiasm clearly in worship. Keziah Miner has invited more people into musical leadership, and it has been a joy to watch worship become an even more shared and collaborative offering. The gifts of this congregation continue to enrich how we praise God together. Carolyn Perkins continues to find new and creative ways for the congregation and our choirs to collaborate, and Joni Van Rossum does a wonderful job connecting all of our musical gifts. I am deeply grateful for the energy and care surrounding worship and music at Desert Cross.

There has also been enthusiasm around ministry, both new and familiar. Ministries like Borderlands Produce Rescue are taking root, while long-standing staples such as Vacation Bible School and I-help continue to thrive and bless our community and those we serve.

We've seen enthusiasm as well in our work of renewal. The Renew Team in Gilbert spent significant time planning together, meeting with church leadership, and listening carefully to members of the congregation. Because of that work, we now have both consensus and a clear plan to renovate the Gilbert sanctuary and fellowship hall in 2026. That kind of shared vision doesn't happen by accident; it grows out of trust, communication, and a deep love for this church.

One of the most tangible examples of that shared commitment came when we raised the funds to repave the Gilbert parking lot. And in less than a month. It was a powerful reminder that when a need is clear, Desert Cross shows up and responds.

Some of the most meaningful moments of the year happened in simpler ways: Wednesday nights spent around food and conversation, opening a book of the Bible together or gathering for worship, and making space for questions, laughter, and learning. We lifted our voices together in a Hymn Sing and Cantata, and we were once again delighted by the kids' Christmas pageant. A highlight that never fails to bring joy.

I've now had the privilege of serving as one of your pastors for five years. During that time, I've learned that at its heart, Desert Cross is a community that values being present with one another. It is a joy to serve this congregation, and I am grateful for your enthusiasm, generosity, and faith you bring to our shared life together.

Peace,

Pastor Thadd

Council President

Another year has come and gone and what a year it has been. As we reflect upon the last year, we have had many blessings and successes as a faith community, filled with both moments of sadness and joy. Looking back helps us make plan for the upcoming year and the continuing future of Desert Cross.

To begin with I am thankful for the amazing staff we have at Desert Cross. They are so great at trying to provide many opportunities for everyone to be involved in both fellowship and service opportunities throughout the year. Tessa Faust, Director of Youth Ministries, has a year with us under her belt and seems to have built great connections with the youth of the congregation during her time with us so far. The youth had a successful lock-in this year and hosted another youth group from Oklahoma over the summer. I am looking forward to what projects they will be doing next! Wendy Williams, Office Manager, also has been in the role for a year, but it seems like so much longer as she joined the staff and hit the ground running. She has so many gifts and talents and we are excited to be able to increase her hours in 2026. Joni Van Rossum has officially been in the role of Director of Worship and Media Arts and the spirit he has been bringing to worship and careful planning of the music has made it a more spiritual experience every week. It is so nice to see all the people who have become involved in music this year from bells, song leaders, choir, and special music. There has been a lot more involvement than there has been the last couple of years and it is such a refreshing change.

The City of Tempe approached Desert Cross earlier in the year with an offer to purchase the land just South of the of the bank and West of the current water well. This was space that was beyond the parking lot and was not currently being used by the church. The City has a need to expand the well site. We agreed as a congregation and are currently in Escrow for that purchase. This site will help to provide water for the people in Tempe, which is pretty amazing that we are able to do that. The money from the sale will be put into a *capital expense fund* for more emergency maintenance issues that arise as the building age. Unfortunately, our plans for a mission project with Family Promise will not be moving forward at this time, but it is still something we can look at in the future.

Desert Cross continues to support the community by offering our campuses to several 12 steps groups, Pets for Vets, other congregations, and other ministries. The “Primer School” that was renting space in 2025 will not be renting from us in 2026. We are blessed to have great physical space to offer these groups a place to gather and we will continue to be available to others as need arises.

One of the most exciting projects that Desert Cross started this year was a partnership with Borderlands Produce Rescue. We have had several successful food pickup days in Tempe with our first one blocking traffic all the way down McClintock Drive to Elliot Road. This mission is a huge blessing for families to be able to afford fresh produce at a very reduced price and it helps to keep all that produce out of landfills. We have applied for a grant from the Synod to expand the operation and get some needed supplies to improve and streamline the pickup process. Thank you so much to Denise McClellan for heading up this project and for always going above and beyond the call of duty. I don’t know how Denise gets all the things done in a month that she does; she continues to amaze me. We are so blessed to have her at Desert Cross. Thank you also to Tim Collins for working with Denise on this project and all the other volunteers. We could not have done this without you. We will be doing this once a month excluding the summer months.

One of the ministries that Desert Cross was heavily involved in was the Grace Pancake Mission in Phoenix. Desert Cross members would gather at the church once a month to serve breakfast to the

homeless in that community. This was a ministry that we were involved in for several years and we are very sad to see it come to an end.

We met in small groups throughout the weeks and months strengthen our bonds with each other and our relationships with Christ, Bible studies, ChristCare, Book Groups, Meditation Group, Sunday School, Dinner Groups, etc. to name a few. Besides the weekly and monthly activities that the church was involved in this year, we had some great opportunities for connection and fellowship this last year. We had another successful Golf Tournament and are looking forward to the next one! There were lovely concerts and hymn sings. Another great Trunk or Treat in Gilbert with wonderfully decorated cars, costumes, and great food. We can't wait to see the trunks and costumes in 2026! The stewardship committee put on a wonderful Family Reunion themed potluck gathering this fall which was a great success. Advent Soup Suppers were brought back this year and we had great response. We are looking forward to that yummy soup for Lent. VBS was a success this year with a good group of kids and volunteers. Shannon did a wonderful job pulling it all together as always and Denise Viker was there to make sure that the kiddos were safe throughout the week. Thank you!

I had the opportunity to serve dinner at iHelp this year with the rest of the church council and it was a great experience. I have not done this in several years and it was a very touching experience to me. iHelp is a ministry that serves the homeless community. One night a month the homeless in this program come to Desert Cross for dinner and fellowship. They spend a night on our campus, have breakfast, and go to their jobs the next day. Thank you for all those who are involved in this ministry, it is very important and if you have never had the opportunity to serve and eat dinner with these individuals I strongly encourage you to do so.

In Gilbert, the parking lot cracks were starting to resemble beginning of the Grand Canyon. Thanks to the incredible generosity of members at both campuses, we were able to raise about \$30,000 in three weeks to fix the parking lot cracks. It looks so much better now and we are no longer as worried about twisted ankles as we used to be. We will be looking at doing something similar in Tempe in the near future as there is also a need there.

Speaking of generous gifts to the congregation, we had money donated to upgrade the columbarium and that work has started. The fountain work has been completed and looks beautiful. Thank you to those involved. I know there are more upgrades planned in 2026 and I am looking forward to seeing them as they are completed.

We had another sizable donation by a member for technology upgrades to the church. This has been a need for quite some time and will bring us into the 21st century technology wise. There will be computer upgrades, front sign upgrades, live stream updates, and computer software updates. This will change the way we check in weekly at service and help us to connect and keep in touch with members more effectively.

Over the summer, in Tempe, we moved the two worship services at 8 AM and 10:30 AM to a combined service at 9:30 AM. It was successful and a great way to see people that we didn't see at the other services. After the summer was over, we collectively decided to keep the service time at 9:30 AM and there is such a welcoming and encouraging feeling at the service.

As I am writing this, I am thinking of all the members that we have lost this year that will no longer be with us in 2026. Some of the people who have passed were very involved with the ministries of Desert Cross and I some I have known most of my life. I am grateful for what they contributed to the

congregation and the people's lives they have touched. I have fond memories and know that they are now resting in the arms of Jesus even as we miss them here.

This is a very exciting time at Desert Cross. There is a lot of positive energy around the campuses every Sunday and it is refreshing to see. We have had many new visitors with young families. Thank you for welcoming new people as they join us for worship. There have been several new members joining and many people were baptized this year, in my family as well. I am looking forward to this next year, we are in a great spot financially and are healthier as a community than we have been in the last couple of years. Let's keep this momentum going!

Personally, this has been a big year for me and my family. Being elected president in May has been an honor and I have enjoyed serving the congregation. Our daughter, Jaycee, graduated in the Spring and we celebrated by taking a trip with the entire family along with my parents and my brother and his wife to SeaWorld San Diego. We welcomed George into our family on July 1st and we were blessed to have him baptized at Desert Cross on November 1st. The English family also moved to a new home in August. Walter was presented a Bible from the church, one of the cool milestones on the faith journeys of the kids here. I, also, got a Bible from Desert Cross when I was a kid, so that was such a neat experience. My grandparents also moved about a mile from the Gilbert Campus and decided to join after attending worship at Desert Cross for four year. We could not have done 2025 without the support of the congregation not only now, but for my entire life. I don't know who I would be without you. Thank you for the meals and the prayers. Thank you for embracing the wild English boys with open arms.

Looking back over all 2025 was a great year as a congregation, we are in a great spot entering 2026 and I am blessed to be able to work alongside a wonderful church council and Gilbert chamber. We praise God for where we are today and where we will be moving forward. Thank you to all of you who serve the church in small and big and all of you who work tirelessly behind the scenes to make Desert Cross what it is today and what it will be tomorrow. The future is bright!

Humbly,

Victoria (Vicki) English

Council President and careful planning of the music

Annual Meeting

March 2, 2025

Minutes taken by: Marie Ihlefeld
Start Time: 1:11 PM
End Time: 1:38 PM

Reached a quorum – quorum has been reached

Welcome: Anna Sion

Expressing gratitude to everyone who is here today. This is a great time to reflect and review what we have done. Let's celebrate our victories and relationships we have built. Please remember to keep God at the center of our conversations. Speak with respect, bring honor to God & love one another. Pray for unity, wisdom and a spirit of humility. Please raise your hand and wait for a microphone. Please state your first and last name before your question. Enter questions into the chat box online & vote online following the in-person vote. Nominations can be put forth online later.

Approval of Agenda:

- **First:** Denise Viker
- **Second:** Dan Moellering
- Unanimously Approved

Opening Prayer: Pastor Andrea

Annual Report: Brent Borchers/Doug Bjotvedt

Income was \$44,000 short of what was expected last year. Facility Rental income was \$100,000 more in 2024 than 2023 & \$75,000 more in 2023 than it was in 2022. In 2025 we will lose \$20,000 – \$30,000 from Spirit of Joy's rental. 2024 Expenses were \$48,000 to \$49,000 less than expected.

Payroll is down \$85,000 this year due to a decrease by one staff member going forward. There was \$5,000 more income than expenses in 2024... This is the first year in a while there was no government grant.

Contributions have gone up significantly over 5 years. Contributions are up \$200,000 since 2020 and that does not include government grants. Income breaks down into general, rental and offering, with offering being 75% of total income. Payroll is 57% of expenses, with operational costs being the 2nd largest expense. Desert Cross tithes with 8% of expenses going to Outreach.

A lot of the income comes into restricted funds & unrestricted is \$71,000 negative. We would be short if everyone wanted to use their money at once. Liabilities are going down. The congregation is healthy, and the true value of our campuses is high.

Endowment gave out \$20,000 and increased in value \$40,000 in 2024.

2023 Audit showed the books are in good order with no issues.

Questions about the Annual Report? No questions

Approval of Annual Report

- **First:** Laura Clark
- **Second:** Vicki English
- Unanimously Approved

Financial Update Today vs. Last Year: Brent Borchers

Great December, kept at balance. January and February expenses were higher than income. Down \$12,000 Income to expenses so far in 2025 about the same as 2024. Expenses are currently above income. \$30,000 was the goal for the parking lot resurfacing in Gilbert – we have hit that goal. Brent is reaching out to contractors for bids.

Nominating Committee: Angela Nannenga:

The nominating committee is comprised of 6 members. They nominate candidates to be elected to council, chamber & endowment.

The members are Past President + 2 outgoing members of council & we would like to add outgoing chamber members as well. Leslie Demarco is nominated by Angela & we need 2 more members nominated today to complete the group.

The Nominating committee is finding candidates for the following positions:

Positions on Council:

- President
- Vice President
- Two Tempe at Large Members – one two-year & one three-year term
- One Gilbert at Large Member

Positions on Gilbert Chamber:

- Hospitality
- Communications

Positions on Endowment

- One member

Questions:

Vicki English: What is the term for chamber and endowment positions?

A: 3 years

Need Nominations for the nominating Committee. Angela Nannenga nominated Patrick Jennet, he agreed to be on the nominating committee this morning.

Erin Pelly volunteered to be part of the nominating committee

Nominating Committee Members:

- Leslie Demarco
- Angela Nannenga
- Adam Clark
- Carolyn Perkins
- Patrick Jennett
- Erin Pelley

Motion to Accept Nominating Committee

Members:

- **First:** Denise Viker
- **Second:** Gail Dempsey
- Unanimously Approved

Synod Assembly

The Synod assembly is in Las Vegas, Nevada June 12 & 13th. We need 2 men and 2 women to volunteer to attend the Synod Assembly with Pr. Andrea & Pr. Thadd.

Questions?

Denise Viker: Is the Synod Assembly all Day?

Pr. Andrea: The Synod Assemble is all day Thursday & usually done by 3pm Friday.

Synod Assembly Volunteers:

- Brent Nannenga
- Angela Nannenga
- Don Pelley
- Ellen Minde

Closing Prayer: Pastor Thadd

Motion to Adjourn:

- **First:** Adam Clark
- **Second:** Shannon Faucett
- Unanimously Approved

Elections Meeting

May 4, 2025

Minutes taken by: Marie Ihlefeld

Start Time: 1:06 PM

End Time: 1:30 PM

Reached a quorum – quorum has been reached

Welcome: Anna Sion

Thank you for your care and commitment to our community. It is a blessing to gather. All positions are nominated except the Vice President Role. Keep a spirit of grace, patience and kindness. Please be mindful of how we speak in this space. Open our hearts in a shared purpose in this trusting space.

Approval of Agenda:

- **First:** Denise Viker
- **Second:** Laura Clark
- Unanimously Approved

Opening Prayer: Pastor Andrea

Financial Update: Brent Borchers

This is a good time to recap the year. For the First 1/3 of the year Revenue is \$9,000 ahead of expenses. Last year at this time revenue was \$33,000 behind expenses. Revenue is \$58,000 higher this year compared to last year. Expenses are \$15,000 higher compared to this time last year. Summertime giving goes down with less people, Fall is better. If you are able, please consider giving in the summer before Fall arrives.

Elections: Anna Sion

Thank you to our past president Angela Nannenga, Gilbert at Large Member Carolyn Perkins, Tempe at Large Member Adam Clark, Chamber Member Jean O'Donnell, Chamber Member Leslie Demarco & Endowment Member John Christiansen. Your leadership has guided us through difficult times. Thank you for blessing our community with your time and gifts.

Thank you to the nominating committee for your time and service: Angela Nannenga, Carolyn Perkins, Adam Clark, Erin Pelley, Leslie Demarco and Patrick Jennet.

According to the Constitution is the Vice President Position is unfilled the responsibility goes to Council to appoint a Vice President.

Candidates:

- Council President: Vicki English
- Council Tempe At Large: Sue Eberle
- Council Tempe At Large (2-year term): Mark Farrell
- Council Gilbert At Large: Tony Tainter
- Chamber Hospitality: Dana Hargis (re-election)
- Chamber Communications: Kerry Wilson
- Chamber Mission and Outreach: Joy Petroff
- Endowment: Matt Hunsaker (re-election)
- Endowment: Lee Stadler

Motion will be needed to approve candidates with a verbal vote. If unopposed we can proceed with a verbal vote.

Election Questions & Answers:

Q: Don Legacy: Can those who are attending online vote too?

A: Yes, even with a voice vote.

Q: Laura Clark: Do we know someone who is not here that would be a good Vice President?

A: The nominating committee asked 20 people & they all rejected the VP position.

Motion to Approve all Election Candidates Verbally

- **First:** Laura Clark
- **Second:** Lisa Bjotvedt
- Unanimously Approved

Use the form online to Vote on Candidates.
Verbal Vote of Election Candidates: All In Favor?
All election candidates unanimously approved.

Presentation of Gifts: Pr. Andrea, Pr. Thadd, & Anna Sion

Handmade Wooden Crosses for all the years of faithful service at Desert Cross were presented to
Outgoing Council Members: Angela Nannenga, Carolyn Perkins, & Adam Clark

Outgoing Chamber Members were presented with quilts w/ prayers & appreciation from the DC quilting group before the election meeting.
Anna thanks everyone for their support as she moves from current president to past president.

Closing Prayer: Pastor Thadd

Motion to Adjourn:

- **First:** Adam Clark
- **Second:** Laura Clark
- Unanimously Approved

Special Congregational Meeting For Tempe Land Sale

August 3, 2025

Minutes taken by: Marie Ihlefeld

Start Time: 1:09 PM

End Time: 1:35 PM

Reached a quorum – quorum has been reached

Welcome: Vicki English

Opening Prayer: Pastor Andrea:

Motion to Approve Agenda:

- **First:** Laura Clark
- **Second:** Adam Clark
- Unanimously Approved – Motion Carries

Tempe Land Sale

In 2012 The City of Tempe Purchased ¼ of an acre from Desert Cross for the Well Site and Pumping Station. In 2025 The City of Tempe approached Desert Cross to purchase property to expand the current well site.

Proposal from Council for the Congregational Vote:
We will be selling the land for a sale price of \$245,000

Council recommends proceeds of sale be allocated as follows:

- 10% to Mission and Outreach (\$24,500)
- Pay off current A/C Loan of \$53,450.90 (interest rate 7.375%)

· Remaining amount will be put into a Capital Expense Fund for expenses of \$10K or more with 50% pledge matching from the congregation (\$167,049.10)

Capital Expense Fund Details

· Remaining amount will be put into a Capital Expense Fund for expenses of \$10K or more with 50% pledge matching from congregation (\$167,049.10)

· This will be a budgeted line item in the proposed budget moving forward. This is for expenses for building maintenance items over \$10K e.g. roof repair, parking lot, landscaping, A/C, etc.

· In order to spend the money in the account the following must be done:

1. Must be a building or property expense.
2. Must be over 10K and voted/approved by the congregation.
3. Must have 50% of the project raised by special giving. (Example – New A/C is needed, cost of new A/C is \$50k, congregation will raise \$25K through special giving and \$25K will come from the capital expense budget.)

Questions:

Rhea Fernandes: What is the well-site? Is it pumping?

- Yes, it is pumping

Christine Beatty: What will the well-site look like?

- It will match the current architecture

Georgia Waters shared background about the original well purchased in 2012 & built by the company she worked for. A good quantity and quality of water is coming from this well to support The City of Tempe.

Amy Minear: Why is Council proposing a special giving match?

- To get commitment from the congregation for special projects. The first half of a fundraising project is always easier to raise while people are excited, the second half is more difficult.

Michelle Reaban: What has happened with the Family Promise Project?

- The micro village project with Family Promise was not a done deal. The sale of land for the well-site will not allow that project to go forward, it requires too much property.

Michelle Reaban: What about the parking lot that sits empty?

- Council has discussed exploring the parking lot for Family Promise & we need to find out how much parking is required.

Mark Sanders: We will not be able to do the Family Promise project because of Eminent Domain?

- That is correct. The City of Tempe approached us with the purchase offer. They have Eminent Domain and were willing to work with us. We were

able to negotiate a higher price with The City of Tempe.

Georgia Waters shared water is becoming an increasingly scarce resource. We are proud we can provide this for so many people for decades into the future.

Suzie Scott: What is the size and is the offer at the going rate?

- The size is ~15,000 sq ft and it is at the current market rate for the land. A little over \$16 per sq foot.

Gary Balliet: Can we reconsider the amount leftover & set down an immediate amount for upgrading the parking lot in Tempe?

- We do not know what the costs will be for work needed in Tempe – could be hundreds of thousands of dollars.

What we are Voting on:

1. Vote to approve land sale to the City of Tempe for \$245,000

Voting to approve the recommendation from Council for what to do with the \$245,000.(10% to Mission and Outreach, pay off A/C loan, remaining money in a Capital Expense Fund)

Motion to Approve the Land Sale:

- **First:** Laura Clark
- **Second:** Denise Viker
- Unanimously Approved – Motion Carried

Motion to Approve Council Recommendation for the proceeds from the land sale:

- **First:** Christine Beatty
- **Second:** Lisa Bjotvedt
- Unanimously Approved – Motion Carried

Financial Update:

Almost \$33,000 behind budget going into July. \$120,000 was the rough expenses for July. July is not final yet but had a \$38,018.94 deficit. \$18,000 was paid for the Gilbert parking lot and there were \$9,000 or so in A/C expenses. \$71,000 is the deficit year to date. July giving was down.

Our A/C expenses are high because we have 30 A/C units. Gilbert A/Cs are about 18 years old and some Tempe A/Cs are 21 years old. Need to replace a lot of A/Cs going forward, about one every year or two.

Announcements:

- The council voted to appoint Mary Beth LaMont as the Council Vice President. Congratulations and thank you Mary Beth for accepting this position.
 - August 17th is the Town Hall meeting at 10:30am in Gilbert
 - August 22nd is the Diamond Backs game
 - September 7th Fall Programing starts
 - September 27th Golf Tournament Fundraiser (flyers in the Narthex)
 - Stewardship has a lot of exciting things planned in the fall. Check your emails.
- Closing Prayer: Pastor Thadd

Motion to Adjourn:

- **First:** Lisa Bjotvedt
- **Second:** Gary Balliet
- Unanimously Approved – Motion Carries

Budget Meeting December 7, 2025

Minutes taken by: Marie Ihlefeld
Start Time: 1:09 PM
End Time: 1:41 PM

Welcome: Vicki English

Welcome Everyone. We are approaching quorum and will not vote on the budget until quorum is reached.

There will be plenty of time for questions. Please wait for MaryBeth LaMont or Sue Eberle to bring you a microphone and state your name and your question.

Opening Prayer: Pastor Andrea

Brent Borchers: Financial Update:

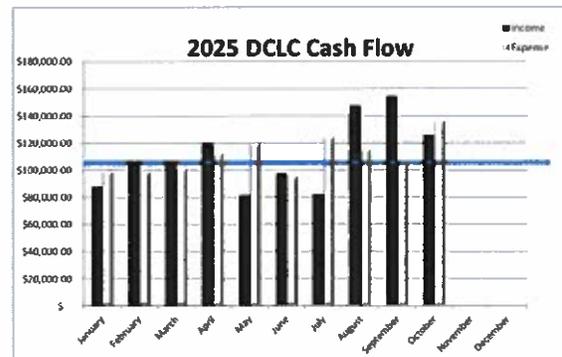
Financial Update

2025 Budget \$1,256,033

As of 11-30-2025

Revenue	YTD 2025	YTD 2024
General	\$ 834,511.46	\$ 753,881.02
Hunger Jerr/Outreach	\$ 42,335.00	\$ 37,216.62
Programs & Worship	\$ 7,094.33	\$ 17,610.30
Other/Special Gifts	\$ 176,630.54	\$ 47,582.54
RENEW	\$ -	\$ -
Endowment In	\$ 24,500.00	\$ 10,600.00
Niche Sales	\$ 5,343.75	\$ 5,906.25
Prepaid Rent	\$ -	\$ 21,000.00
Rent	\$ 187,369.82	\$ 152,065.00
Total Revenue	\$1,257,785.60	\$1,045,661.73
Expenses		
Operations	\$ 179,793.38	\$ 143,800.85
Administration	\$ 36,526.33	\$ 21,592.40
Programs & Worship	\$ 22,198.04	\$ 26,143.71
Payroll	\$ 673,382.32	\$ 662,158.89
Other/Spec. Gifts Exp	\$ 15,901.37	\$ -
Mortgages	\$ 83,583.05	\$ 89,678.71
Facilities	\$ 72,216.48	\$ 30,528.09
Endowment Out	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 17,287.75
Benevolence	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 45,000.00
Mission and Service	\$ 24,865.75	\$ 34,283.18
Gilbert Parking Lot	\$ 18,001.53	\$ 55,821.75
Total Expenses	\$1,201,568.23	\$1,128,271.33
Difference	\$ 56,217.37	\$ (80,409.60)

We are very thankful for the generosity of this congregation. Comparing the finances from this year to last year, we are \$200,000 higher in income this year than we were at this time last year. We have received over \$100,000 in special giving and received \$23,000 in money from the Cares ACT. General giving is over \$80,000 higher this year and expenses are also \$74,000 higher than last year due to spending on restricted projects. 2024 Gilbert expenses were tracked separately last year and we voted to consolidate that into one church one budget. That line is used in 2025 to track the capital for upgrades to the Gilbert Parking lot, which was \$18,001.53.



2025 DCLC Cash Flow: From the graph we were in financial trouble over the summer with less income and higher expenses. The blue line shows the income levels that we would like to meet each month. The income came up in August and later months. We were thankful to receive an annual gift of \$25,000 early this year to help with finances at the end of the summer. If you can give earlier in the year that

helps get over the hump of higher expenses in the summer. We received lots of special gifts in the fall & one member gave an annual gift earlier this year. Typically, we receive around \$178,000 in December.

We went over budget this year on income and expenses due to special gifts received and special project spending. Numbers are looking better this year. There is money received in 2025 for special gifts that will be spent in 2026.

Questions:

Denise McClellan: What are the special gifts for?
 Brent Borchers: We received \$50,000 for IT upgrades, \$70,000 for Memorial Garden upgrades including the fountain, and \$5,000 for upgrades to kitchen appliances. \$105,000 remaining of these special gifts will carry over into 2026.

Adam Clark: Will the IT upgrades include projectors and other upgrades to the sanctuary or office/campus upgrades?

Brent Borchers: Upgrades will include both the sanctuary and campus/offices, the estimated need for IT upgrades was \$47,000 with a \$3,000 contingency.

2026 Church Budget: Brent Borchers;

Budget differences from last year are due to cost of living adjustments and designated gifts. HR expenses are almost the same year to year. We have 11 salaried staff receiving a 2.9% Cost of Living Increase. Wendy William's hours will increase from 20 to 28 per week. The Grand Canyon Synod has recommended salaries for Pastors. Last year our Pastors received the first half of an increase to bring their salaries closer to recommendations. This year they will receive the 2nd half of the increase. Their new salaries are still a little below guidelines due to cost of living increases. Much closer than a year ago. Ministry budgets are similar to last year with a bit of shifting from one ministry to another. Administrative costs are a little higher. Maintenance and Repair has increased with the \$105,000. Mission and Outreach has decreased due to Grace pancakes pausing its Pancake breakfasts. The Crop Walk has also ended.

Questions:

Marie Ihlefeld: Just to clarify the ~\$105,000 increase in Maintenance and Repair is due to restricted gifts?

Brent Borchers: Yes, the difference is due to restricted gift spending.

Kathy Diekelman: How much is left on the mortgage?

Doug Bjotvedt: There is roughly \$800,000 outstanding on the mortgage for the Gilbert campus.

Stan Fernandes: Is there any cost for Borderlands Produce?

Denise McClellan: No money is budgeted for Borderlands Produce Rescue— they do not charge us anything for it. We bought some tables and carts to help with the distribution & have applied for 2 different grants to cover this. We will find out the status of these grants at the beginning of the year. Borderlands Produce Rescue distribution takes place every month except for the summer months.

Budget continued: Brent Borchers:

Desert Cross Lutheran Church 2026 Budget					
Revenue			Expenses		
Pledges	155	\$ 669,723	Payroll	\$	779,054
Prev Pledgers (not received yet)	9	\$ 40,184	Administration	\$	257,100
Anticipated Non-pledged Giving		\$ 151,951	Mortgage/Debt Reduction	\$	100,800
Facility rental revenue		\$ 150,000	Maintenance and Repair	\$	50,500
Reserve Projects Carry-over		\$ 105,000	Reserve Projects	\$	105,000
Other		\$ 35,000	Ministry	\$	37,300
Niche		\$ 9,000	Synod Benevolence	\$	60,000
Other Faith Contributions		\$ 271,546	Outreach	\$	42,650
Total Revenue		\$ 1,432,404	Total Expenses		\$ 1,432,404
			2025 Budget	\$	1,256,033
			2024 Budget	\$	1,326,474
			2023 Budget	\$	1,232,100

The budget is \$176,000 higher than last year & includes \$105,000 in restricted gifts. 2025 actuals are above budget for income and expenses. We are in good shape heading to the end of the year. The pledge cards have returned \$669,723 with 9 pledge cards outstanding that are typically returned. \$151,951 is the anticipated non-pledged giving. \$150,000 is the estimated rental income, which is a bit conservative, as we have already received more than this for 2025. Other Faith Giving is \$271,546 & we pray for that money to come in during the year. For comparison, Other Faith Giving in past budgets has been higher. In 2021 Other Faith Giving was about \$421,000, it was ~\$372,000 in 2022, and ~\$473,000 in 2023. Brent is more comfortable with the lower number.

Questions:

June Bowman: Where does the other faith giving come from?

Doug Bjotvedt: From Jesus – we usually receive gifts from visitors and extra money shows up (is donated) during the year.

Jill Himes: What is Synod Benevolence?

Brent Borchers: Synod Benevolence is an amount given as mission support to the Grand Canyon Synod & church at large which supports the outreach and ministries of the Synod and ELCA & the same amount has been maintained each year.

Melanie Hobden: Does the facility rental numbers include Gilbert and Tempe?

Brent Borchers: Yes, that facility rental amount includes both Gilbert and Tempe campuses.

Budget Vote:

Vicki English: We have reached a quorum and can proceed with the vote on the budget.

Motion to Approve the 2026 Budget:

First: Stan Fernandes

Second: Laura Clark

Motion Passed - The 2026 Budget was unanimously approved in person & online.

Building / Property needs to Consider in the future for both locations: Vicki English

Tempe:

- The parking lot and landscaping need a lot of repairs to get up to city codes. Trees, plants and irrigation systems need replacement or upgrades.
- Kitchen Appliances need to be replaced or fixed
- Columbarium & Fountain received a special gift of \$70,000 for upgrades.
- We have 35 A/Cs between both campuses that need regular repair & sometimes replacement.
- Upgrade/replace computers as needed for staff
- General facelift of interior/exterior of buildings – carpet replacement, furniture, fixtures & equipment.
- The sign out front will be repaired with money for IT upgrades.
- Electrical and AV upgrades for the main sanctuary.

Gilbert:

- A/C unit repairs and replacement
- General facelift of interior spaces – carpet replacement, painting, furniture, fixtures &

equipment. Electrical and AV upgrades for the main sanctuary

- Refresh Project

Announcements: Vicki English

- ~~Lenten~~ Advent Suppers and Worship are in full swing

· Looking for volunteers to be tellers starting in January – staff is currently handing this each week. If you are interested in volunteering please let Doug know.

- Getting the cookbooks ready in the first quarter -- - please email your recipes to Wendy Williams or Vicki English.

· Computer systems and front signage will be upgraded in 2026 with donations for IT upgrades.

- Water well land sale should be completed in January.

· Great energy at both campuses with a lot of people and excitement. If you have plans or ideas for the future, please come to the pastors and/or council.

- The next Borderlands Produce distribution is December 20

· The next congregational meeting is scheduled for late February – we will be voting in the nominating committees & they will be searching for new council positions = treasurer, vice president, & at large members.

- Check the weekly updates.

Questions:

Stan Fernandes: What is the price of the land sale?

A: The land sale amount is \$243,000 and it is not included in the 2026 budget

Melanie Hobden: In reference to Lenten suppers, the 40/40/40 Lenten Challenge from the Grand Canyon Synod is coming. I love attending church early, many like to start their day early with service. Can we consider a small early morning service on Saturdays or Sundays?

Closing Prayer: Pastor Thadd

Motion to Adjourn:

First: Doug Bjotvedt

Second: Adam Clark

Unanimously approved.

Gilbert Chamber

Mari Johnson – Council Representative
Tracey Landa – Worship Committee
Rosemary Schlechty-Education
Joe Weingartz-Facilities Committee
Joy Petroff-Mission & Outreach Committee

Tony Tainter – Council Representative
Kerry Wilson – Communications
Gary Balliet – Finance Committee
Dana Hargis-Hospitality Committee

New members in 2025 include Kerry Wilson, Joy Petroff, and Tony Tainter. Thank you to Carolyn Perkins, Leslie DeMarco and Jean O Donnell for your outstanding service to Desert Cross Lutheran Church. Thanks To Tracey Landa, Mari Johnson, Dana Hargis, Gary Balliet, Rosemary Schlechty, and Joe Weingartz for your continuing commitment to Desert Cross Lutheran Church Gilbert. You make a difference every week.

Key Events and Initiatives at Desert Cross Lutheran Church-Gilbert in 2025

Initiatives

Gilbert Refresh Team: The Refresh Team conducted a presentation to the DCLC Congregational Council on November 25, 2025. Bryan Riensche and Dana Hargis finalized the designs to update the Gilbert Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall. The Refresh Team will present to the Gilbert Congregation on January 25, 2026, and the Tempe Congregation on February 1, 2026. The DCLC Congregation will vote on the project at the Congregational annual meeting in Tempe on February 22, 2026.

Hymn Sing “It is Well With My Soul” March 30, 2025: Our Hymn sing was well attended, and lots of fun. Carolyn and her endless energy make this event a wonderful opportunity for fellowship. At the end on the hymn sing everybody was delighted to have a piece (or two) of pie. The generosity of our congregation can be felt at each event, as we ended up eating pie for weeks to come.

Gilbert Parking Lot Resurfacing July 2025: The Gilbert Parking lot was resurfaced and looks so much better than the old surface. Thanks to all who donated to this project to make the resurfacing possible.

The Desert Cross Golf Tournament September 27, 2025: Our golf tournament was another success that brought a diverse group of 66 golfers from both Desert Cross locations plus many friends and family members. The event was open to all, and the group had a wonderful time competing and engaging with each other in a fun atmosphere. The tournament brought in net receipts of \$5100.00 that was applied to the Refresh fund. Thank you to Gary and Jane Balliet who worked long hours into making the Tournament happen, without their hard work and generosity this could not be possible. Thank you to all the volunteers who baked cookies, checked in golfers, served refreshments, worked at various stations on the golf course, collected funds, and cleaned up. You are amazing!

Trunk or Treat Event October 23,2025, Thanks to Mari Johson and Dana Hargis who coordinated the event. Thanks to Dan Hargis, Dana Hargis, and Brad Johnson who helped prepare the delicious hot dogs and supply the sides of chips and beverages. Thanks to Donna Tainter for preparing crafts for the children. Big thanks to The Ensemble for providing seasonal Halloween music that everyone enjoyed, and it made our event special. Lastly, we have got to thank the

members that provided the decorated Trunks and amazing special baked treats. Carolyn, you need to open a Bakery! Thanks to Sue Kyle for designating her Thrivent dollars to purchase all the food for the Truck or Treat event meals.

Christmas Cantata Winter Rose and Cookies exchange December 14, 2025: Church members and friends gathered for another amazing Christmas Cantata event. Inspiring Christmas music that included soloist Jennifer Nagy, Cellist Fred Chao, accompanist Martha Hatch, Flutist Liz Rewolinski, our Chancel Choir, our musicians and singers. The music was outstanding. We all thank Carolyn Perkins for planning and coordinating this wonderful event.

Children's Christmas Play and Bake Sale: The Christmas play "Tree Lot Christmas" was a lot of fun with a great message. Our young and old actors did a great job! Thanks to Carolyn Perkins who coordinated the play, and all the actors and volunteers who helped with the setup. Thanks to Donna Tainter who made and provided costumes. Thanks to all you donated baked goods for the bake sale.

DCLC Gilbert Outdoor Church Banners: Thank you to Glen and Lee Stadler who donated the new outdoor Banners that bring attention to our church. Thank you to Joe Weingartz who put up the support poles (Two Times) for the Banners. Everything looks great!

Ministries

Hospitality: Many thanks to Dana Hargis, Mari Johnson, and Claudia Huss, volunteers, and members of the hospitality team. They ensure we all enjoy some fruit, baked goods, and hot coffee every Sunday. Fellowship time after worship is a special and important time for members and guests to socialize and share conversation.

Communications: Thanks to Kerry Wilson, our Communications Chair who takes the meeting minutes during the monthly Chamber meetings, and ensure they are accurate and timely. Thank you, Kerry, for your dedication; we appreciate it.

Property: Thanks to Joe Weingartz is in keeping the facilities running smoothly, helping install custom cabinets in the Fellowship Hall along with Brian Reinsche, providing secure frames for the new outdoor banners, fixing filter problems in the kitchen sink, coordinating the repair of A/C units with Doug Bjotvedt, making sure the church sanctuary carpet is cleaned after A/C backup and spill. We can't say enough about Joe's dedication!! We appreciate and are thankful for all his hard work and commitment to our church. We also want to say thanks to Doug Bjotvedt for all the coordination of the repairs, work, and maintenance in the church at both properties.

Worship Coordinator: Thank you, Sharon Jennings!! The work that you do coordinating all the people that serve every single Sunday is so appreciated, a heartfelt thanks as you do this with a smile on your face. The generosity of your time and commitment does not go unnoticed. Thank you for your dedication to Desert Cross.

Altar Team: Thank you, Tracy Landa and volunteers of the Alter Guild. This team continues to make the Worship Service a seamless experience. Everyone in the Guild is dedicated, generous, and selfless. We also want to thank Jane Balliet for preparing the bread every Sunday and Holidays for the Lord's Supper, we love you dear Jane!

Prayer Team: Thanks to Dwight Perkins, and the Prayer Team, Tracey Landa, Brandon Lundberg, Carolyn Perkins, Gary Balliet, and Mari Johnson. This ministry prays for those that

need a special prayer and are available to share and pray with anybody that needs it. Thank you, Dwight, for recognizing the need for this ministry and taking it off the ground.

Collections: Thank you, Jane Balliet, for coordinating the Tellers each week to count and secure the collections. Thanks to all the volunteers who are involved in counting the collections, and ensuring we have a transparent process in handling part of God's gifts to the church.

Faith Formation: Thanks to Rosemary Schlechty as Education Chair, we appreciate you working with the Director of Children Education to ensure that our children are learning valuable lesson about living a Christian life though Bible stories, and songs each week.

Outreach Team of Desert Cross Gilbert: Thanks to Jane Odonnel, and Joy Petroff. Jane stepped down as she needed to care for her husband and Joy graciously took over. We also want to thank the outreach team members for all the hard work and dedication, Pat Henrickson, Deb Christianson, Susan Tischaefer, Gregg Gile, Glen Stadler, Susan Buhl, Margaret Rouse-Meier, and Karen Olson. The caring and giving of the Gilbert Cross congregation in 2025 was a testament to our faith in loving our neighbors. A big thank you to everyone who participated in 2025. Your support made a big difference to many people and families in the East Valley area. The Hunger Jar that you participated in each Sunday has touched many people, charities, and international Christian missions.

- In 2025 we gave school supplies to the Concordia Charter School that supplied 40 students with their basic school supplies over the school year.
- We gave over 1,000 pounds of canned food goods to the Concordia School Foodbank. This helped many families that lost aid from Federal food programs.
- The Desert Cross Quilters provide an amazing 115 quilts to students and families of the Concordia Charter School. A big thank you to Phyllis, the quilters who step up their quilt donations every year.
- The Gilbert Congregation along with Desert Cross Tempe Outreach supported the homeless in the ihelp program by donating gift cards, socks, underwear, gloves, and many dinners, breakfast and lunch bags each month. A thank you to Glen Stadler along with his dedicated friends, family, and the DCLC members who provided meals, supplies, faith sharing, encouragement, hospitality, clean up, washing pillowcases, and preparing the Tempe Fellowship Hall and Community Center for the arrival of the homeless overnight visitors each month. I know we make a difference to them sharing the love of Jesus.
- Gilbert members also participated in the backpack outreach event in the Fellowship Hall. These backpacks made their way to the homeless on the street. Thanks to Stacey Weingartz and all who participated and organized this event.

Thanks to Angela Nannenga who is always working behind the scenes to make sure positions are filled and helping in any way she can. Your family provides wonderful music in our services every week.

Music Ministry: Chancel Choir, Ensemble, and Gilbert Junior Choir

The music ministry at Desert Cross Gilbert flourished in 2025, marked by growth, creativity, and meaningful worship leadership across all choirs.

The Chancel Choir experienced a season of joyful expansion, growing by nearly one-third in membership. We are grateful for our wonderful accompanist Marta Hatch, a real blessing which has allowed me to truly direct the group. This growth was reflected in a well-attended Hymn Sing “It is Well With My Soul” and the Advent and Christmas cantata *The Winter Rose: Songs of Worship and Wonder*, featuring Joseph Martin’s inspiring *Winter Rose*. Guest soloist Jennifer Nagy, Voice Professor at Chandler-Gilbert Community College, offered a moving rendition of “O Holy Night,” while the Chancel Choir presented the beautiful music of the cantata, concluding with the powerful anthem “Veni Emmanuel” a profound reminder of why God became one of us. We had a first ever Tone Chime choir for the cantata as well, which has inspired a high interest in finding options for developing our own bell choir in the future. Liz Rewolinski, Flute and Fred Chao, Cellist played the music for the cantata as well as other beautiful pieces and it was very worshipful. The service ended with congregational caroling and a festive Christmas Cookie Reception and Hot Chocolate Bar, made possible by Dana Hargis and the dedicated Hospitality Team.

The Ensemble continued to enrich worship several Sundays each month and at special events throughout the year. A favorite highlight was Trunk or Treat, where the group donned costumes and delighted children of all ages with spooky favorites such as *This Is Halloween* and *You’re a Mean One, Mr. Grinch*, *How to Train Your Dragon*, while families enjoyed food and fellowship. The Ensemble also played an important role in the Christmas Cantata, providing instrumental accompaniment for congregational carols and presenting their own selections. On March 24, the group collaborated with the renowned Gilbert Town Fiddlers for the Hymn Sing *It Is Well With My Soul*, creating a memorable and joyful musical partnership. These dedicated young musicians generously share their time, talents, and hearts in faithful service.

The Gilbert Junior Choir continued its mission as worship leaders, growing not only musically but spiritually. Choir members worked diligently in rehearsal, eagerly learning musical and vocal terms and deepening their understanding of the music they sing. This year introduced “Poets’ Corner,” an interactive learning experience where children explored the history and meaning of spirituals and sacred songs through creative displays and discussion. The Junior Choir also participated in “treasure hunts” throughout the sanctuary, discovering answers from the weekly lectionary and connecting music to scripture. They sang for the Stewardship Dinner in November and performed in the Christmas Cantata using Orff instruments. In addition, the choir presented a delightful and humorous Christmas pageant, *A Tree Lot Christmas*, featuring Jerry Whiting as the greedy Mr. Carmichael and a poignant performance by Marie Ihlefeld as the mother. With engaging songs, lively dialogue, and a heartfelt message, the production was enjoyed by all, with beautiful costumes designed by Donna Tainter.

We feel honored and blessed to participate in the music ministry at Desert Cross Lutheran Church and deeply appreciate the wonderful support from so many and the opportunity we have to share the Good News in music!

Our Desert Cross Gilbert campus continues to amaze me with a congregation that is selfless, dedicated, and generous. Each year our Heavenly Father blesses our campus, bringing the wonderful, kind, and joyful people he knows we need. Each year he continues to demonstrate the love he has for us and fills our campus with his presence. We continue to grow, love, and serve in his name. I am honor to be part of this mission, and I pray God will continue to help us in our goals, and desires for the future of our church.

Gilbert Chamber Council Representative

Financial Review

On December 8, 2024, the congregation approved a balanced budget of \$1,256,033 for 2025.

As demonstrated in the variance report, the budget was overfunded by **\$243,000** with total revenues equaling \$1,499,085. Most of that overfunding, \$175,000, is attributed to designated funds for the Memorial Garden, Systems Upgrade, and other projects to be completed in 2026. Likewise, there were expense overruns of **\$83,000**, mostly in maintenance and repairs that resulted in net revenue of **\$161,000**.

Desert Cross Lutheran Church				
Income and Expense for 2025				
Variance Actual to Budget				
Accounts	Actual	Budget	Variance	%
REVENUES				
Contributions				
General Fund	\$ 1,042,386	\$ 1,095,983	\$ (53,597)	
Sub-total Contributions	\$ 1,042,386	\$ 1,095,983	\$ (53,597)	95%
Other Revenue				
Faith and Carry-Over	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Facility Rental	\$ 182,520	\$ 121,500	\$ 61,020	
Memorial Garden	\$ 77,594	\$ 11,250	\$ 66,344	
Programs and Worship Revenue	\$ 21,696	\$ -	\$ 21,696	
Mission and Outreach	\$ 48,283	\$ -	\$ 48,283	
Designated Gifts for 2026 Projects	\$ 105,000	\$ -	\$ 105,000	
Other	\$ 21,606	\$ 27,300	\$ (5,694)	
Sub-total Revenues	\$ 456,699	\$ 160,050	\$ 296,649	285%
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 1,499,085	\$ 1,256,033	\$ 243,052	119%
EXPENSES				
Payroll and Benefits	\$ 733,677	\$ 735,433	\$ (1,756)	
Operations	\$ 261,387	\$ 234,600	\$ 26,787	
Mortgages (Debt Reduction)	\$ 102,217	\$ 100,800	\$ 1,417	
Synod Benevolence	\$ 60,000	\$ 60,000	\$ -	
Programs	\$ 36,540	\$ 36,050	\$ 490	
Outreach	\$ 39,417	\$ 46,900	\$ (7,483)	
Maintenance and Repair	\$ 93,416	\$ 42,250	\$ 51,166	
Other	\$ 11,891	\$ -	\$ 11,891	
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 1,338,546	\$ 1,256,033	\$ 82,513	107%
NET REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	\$ 160,539	\$ -	\$ 160,539	
2025 Extraordinary Income				
Employee Retention Tax Credit	\$ 23,028			
Total Extraordinary Income	\$ 23,028			
2025 Operating Income	\$ 160,539			
2025 Net Income	\$ 183,567			

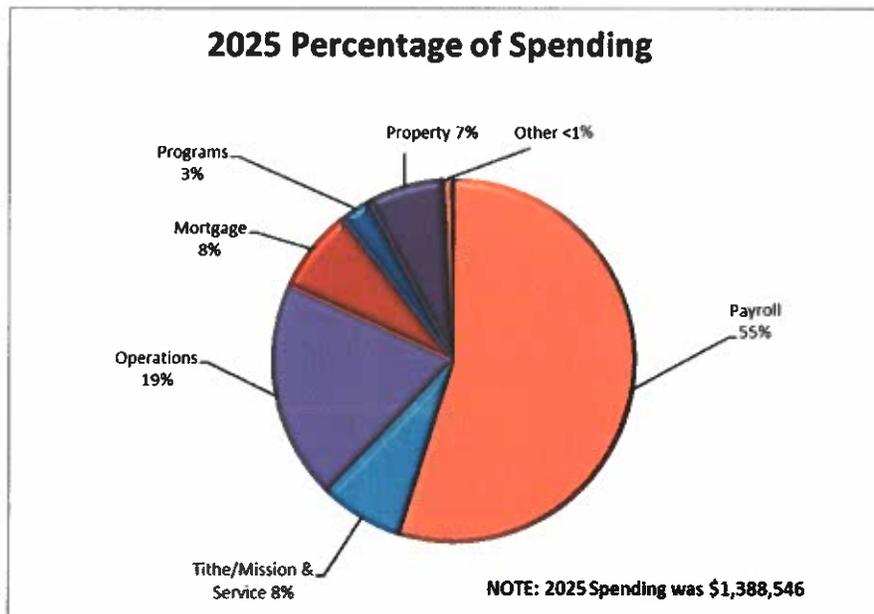
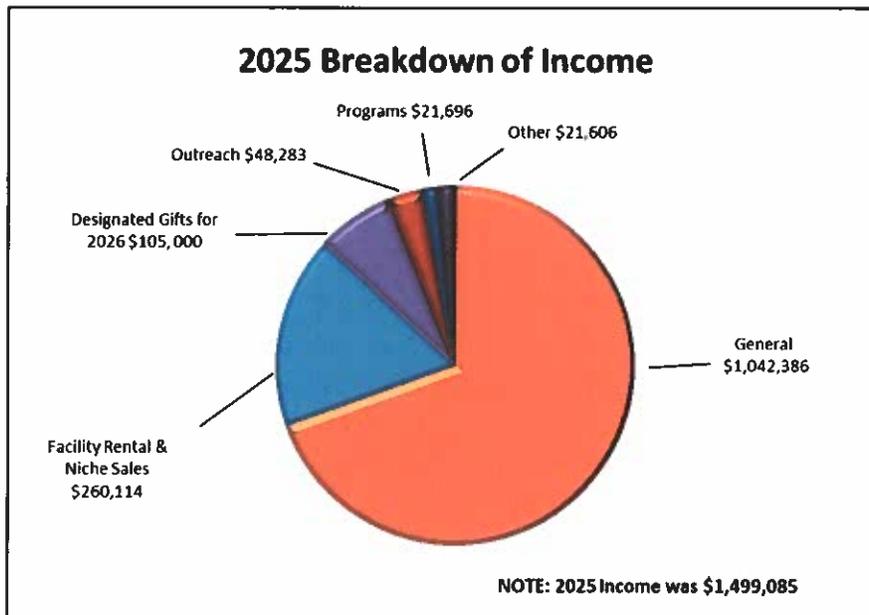
In the 3rd quarter of the year, the IRS finalized our appeal of disqualified employee tax credits in 2023 and issued us an additional refund of **\$23,000** under the C.A.R.E.S. Act. These unrestricted funds were added as extraordinary income giving the year a net operating revenue of **\$184,000**.

General Fund giving increased in 2025 as did Other giving for the reasons mentioned previously along with realized increases in rental income.

5 - Year Contribution and Income History					
Contributions	2021*	2022	2023*	2024	2025*
General	\$ 1,023,904	\$ 950,351	\$ 941,917	\$ 987,133	\$ 1,044,636
Other	\$ 120,240	\$ 163,657	\$ 259,387	\$ 295,393	\$ 454,449
Total	\$ 1,144,144	\$ 1,114,008	\$ 1,201,304	\$ 1,282,526	\$ 1,499,085

* Does not include the Extraordinary Income from the C.A.R.E.S. Act in 2021, 2022, and 2025

For those who prefer graphs over tables, I have broken out the various incomes and expenses in these two pie graphs.



The Statement of Financial Position in non-profit accounting is more commonly known as a balance sheet which balances Assets against Liabilities and Fund Principal (Owner's Equity in the for-profit sector).

Desert Cross Lutheran Church		
Statement of Financial Position		
	2025	2024
Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents		
Unrestricted	\$ (43,482)	\$ (71,494)
ELCA Loan Fund	\$ 311	\$ 27,311
Operational Reserve Fund	\$ 22,235	\$ 22,235
Designated Funds	\$ 345,407	\$ 157,443
Mission Fund Account	\$ 988	\$ 981
Brokerages	\$ 500	\$ 500
RENEW Restricted	\$ 15,210	\$ 22,801
Total Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 341,169	\$ 159,776
Fixed Assets		
Land	\$ 1,403,900	\$ 1,403,900
Buildings	\$ 3,793,242	\$ 3,793,242
Capital Improvements	\$ 951,299	\$ 951,299
Equipment	\$ 127,195	\$ 127,195
Office Equipment	\$ 37,759	\$ 37,759
Office Furniture	\$ 19,421	\$ 19,421
Furnishings	\$ 33,372	\$ 33,372
Music Equipment	\$ 35,194	\$ 35,194
Audio Visual Equipment	\$ 176,697	\$ 176,697
Accumulated Depreciation	\$ (3,698,507)	\$ (3,698,507)
Total Fixed Assets	\$ 2,879,572	\$ 2,879,572
	TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 3,220,742
	\$ 3,220,742	\$ 3,039,349
Liabilities, Fund Principal, & Restricted Funds		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Security Deposit for Facility Rental	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
Employee Withholdings / Employer Paid Benefits	\$ -	\$ -
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
Long-Term Liabilities		
Notes Payable - ELCA Credit Union	\$ 51,642	\$ 56,661
Notes Payable - Mission Investment Fund	\$ 778,970	\$ 834,359
Total Long-Term Liabilities	\$ 830,612	\$ 891,019
	Total Liabilities	\$ 831,612
	\$ 831,612	\$ 892,019
Fund Principal		
Fund Principal	\$ 2,389,129	\$ 2,147,330
Total Fund Principal	\$ 2,389,129	\$ 2,147,330
	TOTAL LIABILITIES, FUND PRINCIPAL	\$ 3,220,742
	\$ 3,220,742	\$ 3,039,349

The restricted cash of \$345,407 is offsetting the General Fund which is (\$43,482) and is comprised of 30 designated funds such as, but not limited to, tenant security deposits, land sale proceeds, bequeathed gifts, grants, and specific ministry support.

The Mission Fund Account and Brokerages are current balances in accounts used for processing non-cash contributions such as stocks and certificates of deposits.

Finally, the remaining cash asset of \$15,210 is that of the RENEW Campaign which concluded in May of 2020. The details for the available RENEW gifts are displayed on the next page.

Of the total income of \$1,499,085 Desert Cross gave \$99,416 (approximately 8%) beyond the walls of our church buildings.

Our largest contribution was \$60,000 in Benevolence to the Grand Canyon Synod and our Mission & Service includes:

Special Hunger Jars and Disaster Relief	\$ 25,954
ELCA World Hunger	\$ 5,272
Lutheran Social Services SW	\$ 2,750
Lutheran Campus Ministries	\$ 2,750
Service General	\$ 1,426
Pacific Luther Seminary	\$ 1,000
I-Help	\$ 266
Total	\$ 39,416

In addition to the above, an Endowment Fund was established in June of 2000 "...to enhance the mission outreach of Desert Cross apart from the general operations of the congregation."

This Fund is privately managed by the Mission Investment Fund, a financial ministry of the ELCA located in Chicago that sets its own value based on several publicly traded funds on the open market.

This Fund is not part of the financials of Desert Cross and does not appear on our financial statements. A committee serves as stewards of this Fund and reviews grant and scholarship requests throughout the year. Mathew Hunsaker serves as Chair of the Endowment Committee, and his detailed report beyond the following summary can be found on page 34.

ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust	
Desert Cross Mission Endowment Fund	
Beginning Balance (Close of Business 12-31-2024)	\$ 592,435
Additions	\$ 22,332
Withdrawals	\$ (30,000)
Reinvested - Fund A	\$ -
Change in Value	\$ 73,065
Ending Balance (Close of Business 12-31-2025)	<u>\$ 657,832</u>

The RENEW Campaign, a 3-year campaign, concluded in May of 2020. There were two components to the campaign - RENEW Home (to address deferred maintenance) and RENEW Mission (10% of the campaign to be shared outside the walls of Desert Cross).

Actual gifts received were \$360,000 of the \$375,000 pledged which equates to 96% of pledges being received - further testament to the generous support of, and commitment to, Desert Cross Lutheran Church.

For 2025, about \$7,600 was spent in support of the new Borderlands Produce Rescue partnership along with a table sponsorship for Fiesta Under the Stars, an event in support of The Children's Home Project.

RENEW Campaign	
June 2017 - May 2020	
Pledged Amount	\$ 374,697.00
Amount Received (96% of Pledge)	\$ 360,249.00
Remaining RENEW Balance on 01/01/2025	\$ 22,801.00
RENEW Mission Projects in 2025:	
Fiesta Under the Stars	\$ 375.00
Borderlands Produce	\$ 7,216.00
Total	\$ 7,591.00
Gifts Available as of 12/31/2025	
RENEW Home	RENEW Mission
\$ 12,095.00	\$ 3,115.00

Audit Report

December 1, 2025

Church Council
Desert Cross Lutheran Church
8600 S McClintock Drive
Tempe, AZ 85284

The church audit committee applied agreed upon accounting procedures to the accounting books and records of Desert Cross Lutheran Church as of December 31, 2024.

All information included in these accounting records is the responsibility of the management of Desert Cross Lutheran Church.

Our procedures were performed based on the recommendation of the Treasurer of the ELCA. The information subjected to a limited sampling of the general accounting within the church, including the process and procedures involved with cash receipts, accounts payable and vouchers, bank reconciliations, member contributions and pledges, payroll and withholding tax, and general insurance coverage.

The church audit committee members, John Christiansen and I are pleased with the records we reviewed and the documentation that supported them. There are no significant findings to report to management. I appreciate the time and work of our audit committee members and Deanna Soll and Doug Bjotvedt.

Sincerely,

Lauren Farrell

Church Audit Committee Chair

CC: Doug Bjotvedt

Worship and Media Arts

2025 was a defining year for Worship & Media Arts at Desert Cross Lutheran Church. Across both campuses, we experienced beautiful musical offerings, worship tech innovation, and a growing bond and sense of unity among staff, volunteers, musicians, and congregants.

This year was marked by worship music excellence, pastoral collaboration, volunteer empowerment, and expanded digital reach—all rooted in the shared goal of glorifying God and serving God’s people with care and intention.

Worship & Music Ministries: Highlights and Celebrations

Major Musical Milestones

Palm Sunday & Easter Cantata (What Wondrous Hope)

A true highlight of the year. With 30 choir members and 9 instrumentalists, the cantata was widely praised as “*one of the best in decades.*” It became our **most-watched YouTube video**, extending its ministry far beyond Easter morning.

Christmas Choir Festival

New Liturgical Music & Composition

Original Lenten, Easter, and Epiphany Kyrie's and Gospel Acclamations were composed and warmly received.

Worship Innovation

Desert Cross Night Prayer (Lent)

Developed in collaboration with Pastor Andrea as a meaningful alternative to Holden Evening Prayer. This service brought fresh depth to midweek Lenten worship and received positive feedback from both campuses.

Blended Summer Worship Model

One unified 9:30am service at each campus successfully integrated traditional and contemporary elements, reinforcing our identity as a multi-style yet unified worshipping community.

Youth & Emerging Leaders

Particularly at the Gilbert campus, youth stepped into instrumental and worship leading roles with enthusiasm and growing confidence. This is a real encouraging sign for the future of our worship ministries.

Media, Technology & Digital Ministry

Technology Upgrades

New Media Computer in Tempe with ProPresenter integration, which really improved worship visuals and volunteer workflow.

Gilbert Campus Tech Upgrades ordered and partially implemented, including sound system improvements and a new media computer.

Screen repainting in Tempe improved visual clarity, however installing LED screens at some point is definitely a wish and a goal for the future.

Livestream & Reliability

Major improvements to livestream stability, audio quality, and redundancy.

Reliable livestream presence every week on:

Church Website

Church App

YouTube

Digital Reach & Social Media Growth (2025)

YouTube (Year-End)

6,569 views

43 subscriptions added

97 video shares

95 likes

Facebook (Year-End)

29,769 views

886 content interactions

Our online presence continues to extend Desert Cross's worship and witness well beyond our physical walls.

Collaboration, Leadership & Administration

Throughout the year, I worked in close and trust-filled collaboration with the pastors, particularly in shaping worship planning, seasonal themes, and the overall musical direction of our services. This shared approach allowed worship to remain both theologically grounded and artistically cohesive across the church year.

Careful planning and advance preparation ensured uninterrupted continuity in worship and media operations, even during periods of international travel. All services, musicians, volunteers, and technical elements were fully scheduled and prepared ahead of time, allowing worship to proceed smoothly and confidently in my absence.

I also provided ongoing support for memorial services and special events, approaching each with a sensitivity and commitment to technical excellence, recognizing the importance of these moments in the life of the congregation and the families we serve.

In addition, I contributed written reflections on worship and music for the Faith Formation website, offering theological and practical insights intended to deepen congregational understanding of our shared worship life.

Areas for Growth & Improvement

While 2025 was deeply fruitful, several areas remain priorities:

Equipment Needs: Mic stands, music stands, microphones, and continued tech investment.

Gilbert Campus Tech Completion: Final installation, training, and optimization.

Volunteer Capacity: Continued recruitment and training to support sustainability.

Goals for 2026

Complete both Tempe and Gilbert campus tech upgrades.

Expand song leader ministry thoughtfully at both campuses.

Introduce new original congregational music.

Strengthen youth involvement in worship leadership.

Invest in volunteer training systems and documentation.

Invest in ongoing education.

Support long-term sustainability through planning, delegation, and team development.

Closing Reflection

2025 was a year of creativity and faithful but sometimes hard work. Most of it taking place behind the scenes, but always in service of God's people. I am deeply grateful for the encouragement, collaboration, and trust of the council, staff, volunteers, and congregation.

It is a privilege to serve a church that values beauty, participation, innovation, and unity in worship. I look forward to what God will continue to unfold in 2026.

In His Service,

Joni Van Rossum

Adult Ministries & Missional Service

Stories of Joy

Our Stories of Joy blog is eight years old. Our blog gathers and promotes Modern Day Gospel Stories. We keep an eye out for people “doing good” in the world, and we share those stories. It’s designed to be a tool for the people of Desert Cross to share good news stories with our family and friends. When you see Stories of Joy you enjoy, we encourage you to share our blog with others. For some good news in your inbox, sign up to follow the blog at www.storiesofjoy.org

2025 Stats for Stories of Joy:

124 Followers

105 Stories Published

1669 Visitors to our Website

2842 Views of our Webpages

53 Different Countries Viewed our Website - The countries with the highest views (after the US) were Canada, China, Germany, Ireland, India, Indonesia, Belgium, Sweden, Philippines, Netherlands, Japan, United Kingdom.

Desert Cross Faith Formation Website

This was our Desert Cross Faith Formation website’s seventh year. Our hope for this project is to provide folks with good tools to study the good news, wherever they are and whenever they have the time. Our tagline is: Exploring Faith. Making Connections. A few years ago we added monthly Playlists to the website, and we’ve continued that practice. We choose a theme for the month based on the lectionary readings and publish Playlists designed for Children, Youth, and Adults. Folks can explore the Playlists throughout the month at their own pace. Please sign up to follow the website at www.dclcfathformation.org to get updates on new posts.

2025 Stats for Desert Cross Faith Formation:

148 Followers

67 Posts

1565 Visitors to our Website

3542 Views of our Webpages

43 Different Countries Viewed our Website - The countries with the highest views (after the US) were Canada, Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland, Sweden, Germany, United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Turkey, China.

Adult Study

The monthly Adult Playlist on our Desert Cross Faith Formation Website continues to be a good tool for faith formation. We used the theme from the Adult Playlist in our Adult Forum offered by Pastor Andrea and Pastor Thadd. Elaine Kraemer led Meditation Groups two times per week. We offered four Pastor Classes, two led by Pastor Steve and two led by Pastor Thadd. Lola Peterson and I offered Book Groups throughout the year. Thank you to all of them for offering studies and a big thank you to all of you for attending these groups. It’s a gift to the community and to each other when we come together to learn.

ChristCare Small Group Ministry

ChristCare Groups are a vital part of Desert Cross. The love and support folks receive in our groups is beautiful to witness. I hear it again and again all year long. Thank you to our leaders and our group members for gathering together for study, fellowship, prayer, worship, and missional service.

Pastor Thadd, Dawn Collins, Tim Collins, and I serve on the Equipper Team. Thank you to our leaders and equippers for being my partners in this ministry.

Nonprofit Partnerships

Forming nonprofit partnerships is part of the Desert Cross Strategic Plan. The people of Desert Cross told us that they want to get outside the walls of Desert Cross and serve in the neighborhood, so that's what we're working on with this project. For several years, I've been reaching out to nonprofits in the East Valley and asking how we can help them with their mission and serve alongside them. I prepare a monthly Desert Cross Serves Email Newsletter highlighting opportunities to serve outside the walls of Desert Cross.

In January, we kicked off our theme for 2025: Serve Somewhere New. The people of Desert Cross were encouraged to try serving at a new place or in a new way. By serving somewhere new, we broke out of our "comfort zones" and found new ways to serve. You continue to be incredible ambassadors of God's love!

We started our new partnership with Borderlands Produce Rescue in November. Desert Cross is serving as a monthly distribution site, getting rescued produce out to folks in our neighborhood. Between our November and December events, we distributed more than 650 boxes, totaling more than 43,000 pounds of food. The Desert Cross community has come together with great volunteer support for this project, and we're attracting volunteers from outside Desert Cross too!

We hope you try out our challenge for 2026: Love Your Neighbor, Serve Your Neighbor!

Desert Cross Serves

Our Faith Formation Team includes service projects and service events as part of our Faith Formation programming each semester. We held a Desert Cross Serves Project in January, packing health and hygiene items. The Desert Cross community took those bags to share with folks we saw in need around town. In November, we packed snack bags and shared those with our neighbors in need.

We had a Feed My Starving Children Packing Event in April. It was our largest packing event in quite a few years.

In Joyful Service,

Denise McClellan

Youth Ministry

My first year at Desert Cross Lutheran Church. I've had a wonderful first year and have felt so welcomed by staff, the congregation, and of course the youth. I feel like I have gotten to know the kids better over this year and have adjusted to working here well.

My main project of the year was starting up the youth group. For communication we use the app BAND which has the youth and a few parents. To add people to the app, I printed QR codes to put in the Sunday school rooms of the middle and high schoolers for them to scan. The app and the weekly announcements have been essential to getting the youth group started.

Throughout the year in our youth group we had educational meetings as well as meetings where the primary goal was fun and bonding. Some of the more educational meetings focused on learning about Sojourner Truth, myths around Thanksgiving, how the presiding bishop is elected, and learning about Martin Luther King Jr. Some of the activities we have done for fun have been Bible verse racing where students race each other to find a specific Bible Verse, four square, and board games.

Some of the bigger events we had this year was the end of summer/begin of the school year youth lock in. At the lock in we played board games, ate Canes, and talked about the upcoming school year. We also built a large blanket fort and watched The Muppets and Prince of Egypt. The next morning everyone attended church together.

The other big event was we had a group that came in from Oklahoma City and stayed in the Tempe youth room for a week. While they were here we had an outing where both of our youth groups met up and went bowling together. The group outing was a huge success and it was great for everyone to get a chance to meet with other young Christians.

This past school year I have started organizing the Sunday school classes for high school as well as organizing confirmation classes for the middle schoolers. For confirmation classes Pastor Thadd and I have decided on using Augsburg Fortress Echo the Story as the curriculum. I teach the Tempe campus confirmation classes and Laura Book teaches the Gilbert classes. We have met recently to check that everything is on the same page to be ready for the 8th graders confirmation coming in May.

I look forward to the upcoming confirmation and new events that will be coming up. Hopefully we will do a mission trip this year. I'm so grateful for this wonderful group of young people and am excited for another year.

In Service,

Tessa Faust

Children's Ministry

Faith Formation: DCLC is committed to nurturing our children, youth, and the adults who love them as we discover and experience God and community throughout life's journey. We believe the "passing on of faith" is done in community—there are HUGE benefits to having all generations praying, learning, and growing together. Faith Formation allows us to worship, serve, and learn together! We LOVE having kids in worship and an education time for all ages. Education is at both sites and consists of an opening time with music and exploring the gospel and theme of the month through fun and interactive ways. Those with children under the age of 3 can attend Littlest Lutherans. We continue to update our Faith Formation website which includes playlists for children, youth, and adults to engage in faith from home or on the go! Each month we have a new theme and new activities. The faith formation website also has monthly resources that we post that relate to faith. We offer "DCLC Serves" events and fellowship events in the fall and spring. We love having the opportunity for the congregation to serve and have fun together. I am so thankful for the amazing teachers at Desert Cross who share their hearts and time. They do God's work beautifully! Thanks to Arianne Nannenga for her partnership in children's ministry. Also, thanks to our amazing families for their commitment and participation!

Faith Milestones: Our 3rd graders received instruction for *Holy Communion* at a workshop during Lent and received their First Communion on Maundy Thursday. We did Blessing of the Backpacks in August, and the 1st graders received Bibles in September. Moms with new babies receive a new mom devotion book and kids that are baptized receive a card with invitations to our programs.

Faith Luggage: The Faith luggage is continuing to be another at home faith piece for our families. Each family can take it home for a week and spend some time in fun and faith together. The theme of the luggage is "Breakfast with Jesus" and it has devotionals, games, craft ideas, recipes and more. The family can do as much or as little as they want while they have the luggage. Then they will bring it back on Sunday for a new family to enjoy. Gilbert families are taking turns and then it will return to Tempe for new families to try. This has been a fun way for families to have fun with faith at home.

Joyful Noises-Parent-Tot: This outreach program is rewarding for all. It is fun to watch the children learn the routines, songs, and prayers. It has also been a great fellowship time for the caregivers! It is truly a joy to work with these kids and families. We had some graduate out over the summer, but we had new ones join with the new school year.

Kids Connect/Parents Connect: Ari has continued to do a great job planning for and leading Kids Connect. She meets with the kids once a month for games, crafts, planned activities and lots of fun. Laura Book and other parents meet at a restaurant nearby while the kids are having fun. That way the parents get fellowship time too!

Vacation Bible School: ; Vacation Bible School this past summer (June 2025) was a great time! We had over 60 kids 22 of which were from other churches and 12 who do not have a home church. We have about 58 awesome volunteers! It is a lot of work and preparation, but the result is worth it...an amazing faith-filled week where we learned about trusting God in a wild world! The focus is on how when we wonder, feel alone or powerless, when we need help or need hope...we can trust Jesus! I love that each year we get new families and new volunteers that come for the fun. VBS is

one of those ministries where ALL are welcome...no matter your age, or church, or any other difference. I am so thankful for all the volunteers! We have awesome station leaders, crew leaders, and Ari and her song leader helpers are all going to be GREAT! Also, thanks to the congregation for helping with donations of supplies! I couldn't do this without everyone's help! For the service project the kids brought in monetary and toiletry donations to collect for the Children's Hope Project. We look forward to 2025's VBS, Rainforest Falls...Exploring the Nature of God.

Service Sundays/Fellowship Events: Service Sundays are a time for ALL generations to gather and work together to serve others! In January we packed hygiene packs for those in need and in March we had a Donut Day at both campuses. In October we had a Sundae Sunday, and a Service Sunday where we gathered all generations to make snack bags for those in need. Gilbert hosted their annual Easter egg hunt in the spring and their Trunk or Treat event in October. We have such wonderful families here at Desert Cross and we value the opportunity and time to gather for fun, service, and fellowship!

I want to thank the Desert Cross staff, council, congregation, families, and children for making this another year full of blessings at Desert Cross. I look forward to this upcoming year!

In Faith and Love,

Shannon Fossett

Parish Nurse

Faith Community Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice-4th Revision

The FCN Scope and Standards of Practice describe the work of Faith Community Nurses and defines quality parameters for the work. I was one of the authors of the revised standards and Desert Cross is listed in the credits.

Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)

Thanks to a generous donation, we have purchased five AEDs for our campuses. Installation was completed by Darwin Viker and Tyler Clare. The machines are in the community center, fellowship hall, and the education building in Tempe and in fellowship hall and the education classroom in Gilbert. Stakeholder training was done by video training and discussion. AEDs are designed to be used by people who have never seen one and they talk to a user through each step.

Nursery

The Parish Nurse supervises the nursery staff. Josh Fossett, Ryan Fossett, Laney Hunsaker, Harper Hunsaker, Brooklyn Wisch, Alexy Wisch and Emma Weaver work with our youngest members and their families to provide a fun and safe environment during worship and special events. Our experienced team serves during Vacation Bible School week to provide special services for the attendees. Laney Hunsaker left the team in July to attend college at WestPoint. Brooklyn Wisch left the team this summer to attend NAU.

Stephen Ministry

The Stephen Ministry program is training a new group of ministers this year. The current team of Stephen Ministers Heidi Maxson, Susan Pillard and Susan Johnston with Stephen Leaders Dave Landstrom and Denise Viker link with care receivers who are going through life challenges. I appreciate the dedication of our team and the way in which they offer the compassionate presence of God.

National leadership of FAN (Faith, Activity, Nutrition)

I serve as the National Coordinator for this evidence based program from the University of South Carolina. This program provides a framework for congregations to promote wellness in unique ways.

As Parish Nurse, I help individuals by discussing health problems, living options, advanced directives, caregiving issues, grieving, and other topics. I loan and teach safe use of medical equipment to meet the needs of members and their families. I work with our clergy and other staff to provide support and links to resources for those who need assistance.

Thank you for the years of support for the Parish Nurse Ministry,

Parish Nurse - Denise Viker, BSN, RN

Mission Endowment Fund

Financial Status

Fund Balances

- **Pooled Trust Balance:** \$657,832.15 (as of 12/31/2025)
- **Mission Investment Fund Checking:** \$11,021.69 (as of 12/31/2025)

2025 Grant Activity Summary

The DCLC Mission Endowment Fund Committee received **16** grant requests during the fiscal year. Following the guidelines established by the congregation, the committee recommended **15** requests for approval by the church council.

(Note: One grant request for \$5,000 regarding Tempe office security was tabled).

Grant Distributions by Category

Category 1: Community Outreach (Scholarships & Social Programs)

- **College Scholarships:** Approved 11 grants for DCLC students (\$2,000.00 each).
 - **Subtotal: \$22,000.00**

Category 2: Missions of the ELCA (Continent & Worldwide)

- **Holy Trinity Lutheran Church (Chandler):** Seminary intern support (\$500.00).
 - **Subtotal: \$500.00**

Category 3: Capital Improvements (DCLC)

- **DCLC Gilbert:** Hospitality improvements (\$2,500.00).
- **DCLC Gilbert:** Projection and sound equipment (\$2,003.44).
 - **Subtotal: \$4,503.44**

Total Grant Payments Issued: \$27,003.44

The current balance in the investment fund ensures the committee will have sufficient resources for 2026 grants. The committee looks forward to continuing the mission outreach of Desert Cross Lutheran Church.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Hunsaker *Mission Endowment Fund Committee*

Committee Members: Lee Stadler, Terry Kaiser Boming, Matt Hunsaker, Mike McClellan, Herb Mardany

TEMPE COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

The Community Outreach Ministry is a group of members that reach out to serve the needs of others with emphasis on the local community. The Ministry achieves its goals through the efforts of volunteers who give of their time and talent to various projects, along with the Hunger Jar contributions.

PROJECTS - supported in 2025

BLOOD DRIVES - the blood drives have been very successful. There are five drives in 2025 with a total of 97 acceptable blood donations.

KYRENE SCHOOL DISTRICT RESOURCE CENTER - the Center collects needed items for hundreds of families in the district who are underprivileged, with some living in their cars, hotels, or with other family members or are considered living below poverty level. The Resource Center has available for these families, clothing, food, school supplies, and assistance in finding the social services they need.

Two carloads of jackets, coats, and blankets were delivered in early fall. Purses, toiletries, school supplies, and undies are collected and distributed during the year. The Souper Bowl Hunger Jar and food collection proceeds were \$800.36 and 259 pounds of food.

CONCORDIA CHARTER SCHOOL AND KYRENE RESOURCE shared \$1136 of Hunger Jar contributions in June and July for school supplies and personal care items.

COMMUNITY BABY SHOWER in March - This is a cooperative effort with Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest. The program offers education and support to parents of newborns who have little or no support systems.

Hunger Jar proceeds from Tempe and Gilbert provided \$3,050, plus a \$500 grant from Hidden Treasures, to purchase 60 of the following: onesies, toy rattles, books, creams, wash/shampoo, lotion. 50 diaper bags, seven carriers, and seven strollers were also purchased.

WOMEN4WOMEN TEMPE - This is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization that distributes feminine hygiene products to women in our communities who are either experiencing homelessness, or who are financially unable to afford these items. Products are also distributed to school girls by school nurses.

We were able to send \$2,900 from Tempe and Gilbert Hunger Jars offerings in August to Women4Women to purchase product for distribution to over 30 different organizations, medical facilities, homelessness outreaches, schools, food pantries, and drug rehab centers. An additional \$500 grant from Hidden Treasures was also included. We held a packing party at church and packed 465 bags in short order. There was much chatter, laughter, and competition on which line of two packed the most bags!

BE THANKFUL FOOD DRIVE AT THANKSGIVING - two vehicle loads of food were delivered to Kyrene Resource Center. Gift cards were provided instead of turkeys this year.

ANGEL TREE AT CHRISTMAS - We place an Angel Tree in the Narthex. Kyrene Resource Center provides the names with wishes of children, ages 15 and under, for several families. Each child receives one item of warm clothing and one toy or special item of their request. We also provide gift cards for food for each family to enjoy a holiday dinner.

We supported 56 children from 16 families with gifts and gift cards this year. We were able to make sure every child got two gifts. We were also able to provide a large grocery gift card for our new refugee family.

ONGOING: collection of gently used shoes, eyeglasses for Foundation for the Blind, pop tabs for Ronald McDonald House, Coke and toiletries for several homeless programs. Donations can be placed in the narthex.

THANK YOU to Doug Bjotvedt for assisting with the logistics of the financial aspects.

THANK YOU to the Committee members for their passion and willingness to take on projects and follow through to complete

THANK YOU to the congregation for your generous contributions of gift cards, money, food clothing, and encouragement.

AND a special thank you to June Bowman, a faithful partner in this ministry. She helps us stay focused on the needs and opportunities to minister to those in need.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have served as Chairperson for several years. I turn it over to June Bowman.

Lola Peterson

Memorial Garden/Columbarium

The Memorial Garden/Columbarium was established as part of the ministry of Desert Cross that begins with Baptism and continues to the end of life, from birth to death, ashes to ashes. The Garden is a witness within the surrounding community. It is available to Desert Cross Lutheran Church members and family members. Provision was also made for inurement of a person with serious financial need.

Three niches were purchased in 2025, making a total of 79 niches purchased, three committals. There is room in each niche for two urns.

The Renew Committee has met during the year and has developed plans for updating the Memorial Garden/Columbarium area. The fountain was tiled, making a remarkable improvement. Plans being developed include landscaping the areas around the outside of the Garden and the installation of shade sails over the Garden.

We are grateful for those who have provided designated gifts for the purpose of renewal. Designated gifts are gratefully accepted.

You are encouraged to consider the purchase of a niche as you contemplate the end-of-life planning. The placing of the urn at the completion of the Celebration of Life Service is a special time for families and friends to celebrate that life. You are encouraged to stop and take time to sit, pray, and meditate.

Memorial Garden Maintenance.

Lola Peterson

Scout Troop 379

The Scouting program is dedicated to building character, leadership, and outdoor proficiency through inclusive programs that prepare youth for a lifetime of adventure and service. 2025 presented significant changes for Troop 379, as we broadened access to all youth and enhanced our program for future scouts.

Membership & Milestones

In 2025, Troop 379 became the **first and only Scouting troop for both boys and girls in Tempe**. This follows the successful chartering of Troop 3379 (for girls) in July and a subsequent merger approved by the local council, our participating families, and Desert Cross Lutheran Church.

- **Current Roster:** 15 scouts (9 boys, 6 girls) and 15 adult volunteers.
- **Growth:** Despite 10 scouts aging out, we saw 8 new registrations—a record high in recent years.
- **Recruitment:** Without a feeder Cub Scout pack, this remains a challenge, but we believe promoting our family Scouting change will help. Our best recruitment method continues to be word of mouth and referrals. New scouts – youth ages 11 to 18 – are welcome to join any time.

Program Highlights

We meet weekly on Mondays at the Community Center with monthly outdoor adventures across Arizona.

- **Activities:** This year's highlights included spelunking at Peppersauce Cave, camping at Apache Lake, and summiting Mt. Lemmon.
- **National Summer Camps:** Many families choose Troop 379 over other local troops due to our commitment to sending scouts outside AZ annually. Last year, 8 scouts attended Camp Cris Dobbins in Colorado. We also provided adult leadership to a Colorado troop in need, hosting 8 more scouts – for a total of 16 scouts at camp. This summer, our troop will attend Camp Alexander in Lake George.

Eagle Scouts and Community Service

All seven Life Scouts from last years report successfully attained the rank of Eagle Scout– a remarkable feat, as only 4% of youth who join nationwide achieve Eagle. Their collective service projects contributed **more than 1,000 hours** to non-profits across the Valley.

Looking Ahead to 2026

As we celebrate **35 years of partnership** with Desert Cross Lutheran Church, our goals for 2026 include:

- Supporting the formation of a new Cub Scout pack (youth ages 5 to 10) at the Gilbert campus or elsewhere in the East Valley within the next 3 years.
- Deepening alumni and financial development to ensure costs are never a barrier to participation.

Desert Cross Lutheran Church continues to be an outstanding charter organization to our troop. This milestone of family Scouting in Tempe is made possible in collaboration – we are proud to say that Scouting is now available to any youth who seeks it out in Tempe due to your community's support.

Special thanks to Pastor Andrea Cain and Doug Bjotvedt for their steadfast commitment.

Sincerely,

Kelsey Files
Scoutmaster, Troop 379

