



***CHRISTMAS IN THE DESERT***  
*West District **Cactus Patch***  
*December/January issue*

This past year has been quite a challenge for many of us. Not to mention the health issues that many of us have faced, we are now in the middle of one of the most Holy Seasons of our Christmas Calendar and many of us are challenged to help create a joyous time in our homes, hearts and with others. I decided to see if I could find reasons why "celebrating Christmas in the desert" could be a unique way to look at Christmas this year. These ideas aren't original, but **worthy of sharing with those of you who "miss the old fashioned Christmas from our childhoods."**

**Celebrating Christmas in the desert can be an extraordinary experience filled with unique adventures and natural**

beauty. It's important to consider the potential drawbacks such as the lack of traditional Christmas elements and limited amenities. It's a personal choice that depends on your preferences and willingness to embrace something different for the holiday season.

### Experience the Magic of Christmas in the Desert

1. Embrace the Unique Climate
2. The desert offers a one-of-a-kind Christmas experience with its warm and sunny weather. Swap the traditional snow-covered landscape for sandy dunes and clear blue skies. The desert's tranquil atmosphere creates a serene setting for a memorable holiday celebration.
3. Discover Local Traditions
4. Immerse yourself in the rich cultural heritage of the desert by participating in local festivities. From traditional dances to vibrant music performances, you'll get a glimpse into the unique traditions of the desert communities. Don't miss the opportunity to learn about the history and customs of the region during this festive season.
5. Explore Desert Flora and Fauna
6. Take a break from the holiday hustle and bustle by immersing yourself in the desert's natural beauty. Embark on a guided desert hike or safari to discover the diverse flora and fauna that thrive in this harsh environment. Witness stunning desert sunsets and stargaze under the clear night sky for a truly awe-inspiring experience.

7. Indulge in Local Cuisine
8. Treat your taste buds to the flavors of the desert with its distinctive culinary offerings. From traditional dishes infused with local spices to delicacies prepared using indigenous ingredients. The desert's cuisine will tantalize your senses. Don't forget to try the region's signature dishes and desserts for a unique Christmas feast.
9. Engage in Adventurous Activities
10. For thrill-seekers, the desert offers an array of adrenaline-pumping activities. From dune bashing and sandboarding to camel riding and hot air balloon rides, there's something for everyone. Create unforgettable memories by embracing the adventurous spirit of the desert during your Christmas getaway.
11. Relax and Unwind
12. Escape the holiday chaos and find solace in the tranquility of the desert. Whether it's a luxury desert resort or a cozy desert camp, indulge in some well-deserved relaxation. Take a dip in a refreshing oasis or enjoy a soothing spa treatment amidst the serenity of the desert surroundings.

Discover the magic of a desert Christmas and create cherished memories that will last a lifetime. After all, the desert which surrounds us might not be much different than the landscape in which our Savior made His first appearance.





By now our active units have had elections of leadership for 2024. Since our West District leadership team is not in place for the coming year, I will be happy to mail copies of officer timelines that I have put together for local officers. It will give your leaders the information

they need for performing the duties of their office. The other option your leadership team has is to request training by the corresponding Conference Officer. I know they had a fall training but it was conducted before I was ready to put the Cactus Patch out for the winter.

I have almost everything in digital form and will be happy to share with anyone who requests the information and files.

You can request this information from me by emailing me at [westsecbuchholtz@yahoo.com](mailto:westsecbuchholtz@yahoo.com).

I am also available to train anyone who would like to take on the roll of gathering news and putting together the Cactus Patch 4 times a year. Just let me know.

Blessings,

Cheryl Buchholtz

Cell (messages) - 623-285-5244



# *United Women in Faith in the West District*

New Song United Women in Faith

Surprise, Arizona

Submitted by Kimi Ivey, Communications

The last three months of the year were some of the busiest for the women of New Song United Methodist Church. The ladies stayed



engaged with activities including a game day, participation in a church wide ministry fair, a fashion show and of course the annual Christmas Tea.

There was also outstanding support for our local homeless shelter with our participation in the coffee club, our quilters circle getting ready for our churches Family Christmas boxes, the card makers giving out messages of caring for various members of the church, and the knitting and crochet group continuing support for the homeless with a donation of 200 soap sacks.

The church wide ministry fair highlighted all of the opportunities members of New Song have to share their talents and gifts through service. United Women in Faith had their own table, highlighting the events both those in the past and those upcoming ones.

Two major events were the highlight for the quarter-the wonderful fashion show put together by Faith member Janet Rummel and our annual Christmas Tea, coordinated by member P.J. Colebrook. It was hoped the fashion show will become a regular event, as is the annual tea.

Both events were happily attended by many; the fashion show highlighted the hidden talent of several of our ladies runway skills as they strutted their stuff to show the outfits brought by Kym Stutzman, daughter of member Janet Rummel, from her boutique store. The



participants were lovely as they modeled the beautiful and practical clothing.

Family game day was again a fun time for not only our biological family, but our extended church family as well. Card and table games were shared and enjoyed by those who attended.

The Christmas Tea was, as usual, the culmination of the year. Over eighty ladies enjoyed a morning of fellowship, music,

inspiration and books. The theme this year was Winter Wonderland and the decorations and table scrapes reflected the idea well.

And in the midst of all of this, our World Thank day was not forgotten, nor our commitment to our national organization, as we made our pledge





for the year and were able to fulfill our commitment.

So now our attention turns to next year. We, as is the practice, will hit the ground running with our pledge meeting, Souper Bowl Sunday fund raiser, and of course United Women in Faith Sunday. All of this to begin again our commitment to our church and the ladies of United Women in Faith, and our charities. Of course, next year will be bigger and better as we seek God's blessings and do his work.



### DISTRICT TREASURER'S YEAR END MESSAGE

Winter greetings! 2023 is over and we have a new year to look forward to. **I want**

**to thank all 13 of the Unit treasurers who sent in (on time) their year end reports and monies.** It being my first year, I was very nervous; but you ladies made me look good. Thank you for predicting your budgets from 2024. I know many of the Units are smaller and incomes lower. I know we are all aware of the needs around the world especially now and any extra funds that you may have at the end of the year will be appreciated at the national level. We still don't know what will happen in the West District, because there are only 3 District Officers currently. **You make me proud that, despite no training and no annual meetings, the monies are still coming in.** Thank you for your compassion and dedication in supporting our special offerings and pledge requests. Keep each other in prayer and especially remember Cheryl Buchholtz, as she has been the glue, but needs to let go of her responsibilities. Many thanks to June Hanson, our Conference Treasurer, who has been my mentor this year. I have learned a lot and still have a lot to learn. Please don't hesitate to call or email me with questions. I will try to find the answer for you. Keep up the excellent work!!

Blessings,

Sandy Bradley, West District Treasurer



## TRINITY UNITED UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

This has been a busy two months for Trinity's "Women in Faith." We celebrated Mission giving with our usual service in November with the World Thank Offering - in which we learn more about the very special missions that are supported by our giving.

Our Unit meeting in December was one we always look forward to as once again we enjoyed our yearly visit from Sherri Koopoot, a docent from the Phoenix Art Museum. She presents a program each year based around an art/Christian theme. This year the theme was "There is Something About That Name". After the presentation, we enjoyed a salad luncheon together in the Parlor.

It has been bake and create for our Christmas Fundraiser. We offer homemade boxes of homemade cookies and breads, handmade jewelry and prayer beads, and crocheted hats. The money raised from these sales goes to fulfilling our mission efforts.

Trinity Women will also be helping serve cookies after the Christmas Eve service.



This article from Cottonwood came to me dated 9/23. And while much of their news has already taken place, this article shows that our Sisters in Mountain View are busy serving their congregation.

### **Cottonwood, Mountain View United Women in Faith**

The sizzling days of summer are about gone. We are ready to jump into our fall calendar of activities!

September 17th is the day we return to the Sanctuary for our Sunday morning worship service. Due to extensive roof and interior damage from an early summer microburst we have been meeting in Verde Hall. Following worship on the 17th we will celebrate this happy occasion with balloons, cake and refreshments.

September 19th will be our United Women of Faith general meeting. It will be a "happy to be together again" theme. Anyone who would like to share an unusual or especially fun summer experience will have the opportunity to do so.

October 28th and 29th our faithful Angel's Attic ladies will hold their craft show. They work for most of the year preparing for this much looked forward to annual event. The proceeds benefit Mt. View's non-budgeted surprise expenses.

May you welcome Christmas with many blessings and joys.

Submitted by Mary Steig

## Cottonwood, Mountain View United Women in Faith - UPDATE

Just a little catchup on the "doings" of the Cottonwood United Women of Faith.

In November we did what many of you also did and that was to turn in our Thank Offering boxes and donations. It was interesting to hear our president talk about the background and purpose of this Thanksgiving time tradition. As part of the program, we wrote notes on Thanksgiving cards to send to our ladies who are no longer able to attend our regular monthly meetings. Each included a small gift made by one of our members. We had a fun conundrums quiz about turkeys. We laughed at ourselves that we really didn't know much about the names of parts of a turkey. The meeting concluded with everyone receiving a copy of the 100th Psalm so we could recite it together and have a copy to take home.

Potluck luncheons have always been looked forward to for our December meeting. This year was no exception. However, we made one little change. In light of us maybe eating too much during the holidays we made it salads and desserts only. The idea was well received! Our program was the "Joys and Blessings of Christmas". A guest pianist accompanied our singing of Christmas songs and carols that followed each Christmas reading. We had a drawing for door prizes, lovely Christmas centerpieces on each table that were made and donated by a member. In closing we all sang "We Wish You a Merry Christmas".

And so, we in Cottonwood hope all of you had a blessed Christmas and are looking forward to a healthy, happy new year.





**Prescott, United Women in Faith**  
**Submitted by Vicki Scott**

**September - December Meetings**

We meet the second Saturday of each month, board and regular meetings. We have 30 members right now. We have had a busy fall, with two fundraisers.

- Our UWIF "Hooked on Books", directed by Karon Keeler, meets monthly and continues to do well.
- **September; Vicki Scott gave the program, "Suzanna Wesley, Her Remarkable Life".**
- **October; We discussed and planned our "All Souped Up" Fundraiser.** 10-12 ladies signed up to make 6 quart-size soup recipes. We made Chili Beef, Vegetarian Chili, Chicken Vegetable with Rice, and Vegetable Soup. All soups made with the same ingredients, so buyers would know. Each lady made 6-10 quarts, froze them and brought them to church on Sat. and Sunday, after church to sell. Each quart sold for \$10. We made \$670.00. All \$\$ will go to mission.
- **November; We planned for our annual "Cookie Walk", Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>.** This year, each buyer could pick their own cookies, already packed in bags with 4-6 cookies. They would fill a box with cookies they chose. Each box sold for \$15.00. We had 20 + women donate 104 dozen homemade cookies, approximately 1,200+ cookies. We made over \$1,000, which will go to mission.



We have a wonderful group of ladies who work very hard. We will have our Christmas Brunch on 12/16/'23. We are looking forward to a busy but fun year, "Together, we're making the world a better place..."

## PRESCOTT CHRISTMAS BRUNCH PHOTOS



## Shepherd of the Hills United Women in Faith

Season's Greetings! As we reflect on our UWF activities of 2023, our unit is thankful that we have been able to meet together and continue to help make life better for women, children, and youth through our variety of programs and our giving. Together, with all of you, the giving multiplies and spreads both near and far as we each contribute in our own ways.

It's nice to enjoy this cooler weather, and even a bit of rain here and there! Some of our ladies braved the cool morning temperatures as they sold fritters and coffee at Shepherd of the Hills UMC's fall Rummage Sale. Their smiles and friendship were welcoming, and many customers came from the community. The "fritter funds" from this event go into the work of our UWF.

Another recent activity which included the generous support from the congregation, was the creation of about 100 Kindness Kits, which included small hygiene items which are much appreciated in the Circle the City outreach as the kits are freely distributed to those in need. When our luncheon speaker, from Circle the City, shared her story of the work their health clinics do, it was a blessing to be able to give her the boxes of kits which will provide hope to others.

Now that the Christmas season is here, our unit will celebrate with a special luncheon of good food and fellowship. It will be a time of gratitude as we gather together at this end of the year, and enjoy music and holiday joy. This is also the time that we will bring our gifts of clothes, toys, and other requests, for children at Wesley Community & Health Center's Golden Gate Center. Their mission is to provide programs and services that improve the quality of life for children and families.

This is a good time to think of all the women who have walked alongside us on this journey, and to say "Thank you!" for their presence and contributions, as we continue to be a community of women serving in so many ways through the work of United Women in Faith.

Submitted by Gayle Urban

## Willowbrook News

In December Willowbrook had their 21<sup>st</sup> annual Christmas tea. The proceeds went to benefit our pledge to mission. Mary Hollan, provided our musical entertainment.

We had a retreat scheduled in April up at Lake Pleasant, open to all, but conflicts in date may result in either changing date or cancelling. I will have more details after January 2 meeting.

Willowbrook is hosting a spring luncheon inviting the Sun City churches, Surprise area as well but we may have to change those dates depending on rescheduling the retreat date.

I will post any updates for Willowbrook and send them out to the units.

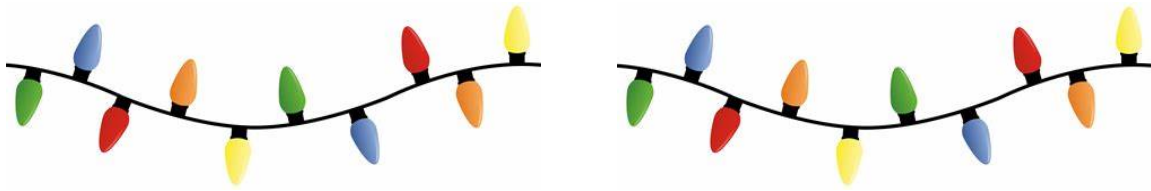
~ Sue Marshall

## WEST DISTRICT NEEDS:

**We need a leadership team if we are to resurrect the West District United Women in Faith.**

**President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Communications. Spiritual Growth, Nominations, Program Resources (includes reading program), Education for Missions, Social Action and Membership Care.**





Have you read the current online issue of  
**SOUTHWEST WINDS?**

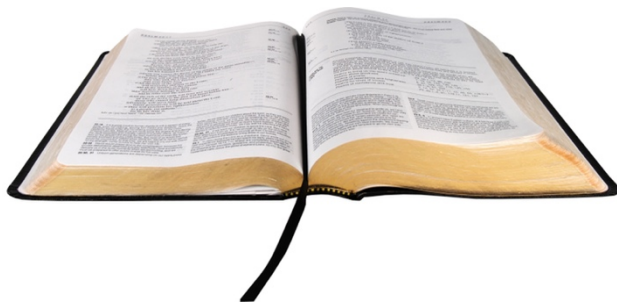
It contains valuable and interesting articles on:

- Memories
- Social Action
- 2024 reading program information
- Special mission recognition pins
- The Legacy Endowment fund
- An article written by Sue Marshall about the needs of the West District leadership team

If you so not subscribe to the SOUTHWEST WINDS, you can read it on the following link:

<https://us6.campaign-archive.com/?u=fbe4fd011f68df9f16ef3ae92&id=1925afb280>

Cut and paste this in your browser and hit return.



Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus. - Ephesians 3:20-21 (NIV)

Prescott, United Women in Faith