



THE CATALINA NEWSLETTER

2700 E. SPEEDWAY - TUCSON, AZ 85716

WWW.CATALINAMETHODIST.ORG

April, 2026

Volume 75, Issue 04



Catalina UMC Has Grown: One Relationship at a Time

by Pastor Kelli

Friends, I want to share something I am genuinely proud to have been part of: in 2025, twenty-four people joined Catalina UMC! Friends, that is nearly 20% of our worshipping congregation in a single year! And that does not count the several more who haven't officially joined but have come to find their church home here. I cannot overstate how significant this is — for any church, but especially a mainline church in the Southwest, and all the more so for a traditional, legacy congregation like Catalina. It's a near miracle and I am so proud of you!

I want to tell you why and how it happened — because I think it matters for where Catalina goes from here. I'm in my 19th year of congregational ministry and over the five congregations I've served, I've come to learn something that seems obvious, but is so overlooked by most church: people are looking for people they can relate to. If they find a relationship, they stay. It's that simple.

Did you know that Catalina averages about one new visitor a week? That might not seem like much, but that adds up to 50 new visitors every year. Of course some slip in and out not wanting to be known, and that's okay. But for the one or two people who take the extra step to complete a Connect Card, something else is going on. I always ask what brought them here and people find their way to Catalina generally in one of two ways: they either find us online because they're looking for an intentionally LGBTQ+-welcoming church — which is still relatively rare in Tucson — or they saw us on their drive down Speedway. That's how most people find us. But the reason they filled out a card? They're looking for their people. They want meaningful connection and community.

It is just as Jesus envisioned and modeled the Church for us — people sharing the journey of discipleship together.

Here's what I did with every Connect Card: after briefly introducing ourselves following worship, I send them a simple email Sunday afternoon (and yes, the immediate follow up is vital!). I say something like Thanks so much for visiting today. I hope you were blessed by the service. I'd love to get to know you better, maybe we could visit over coffee or tea sometime— no pressure, no expectation, consider this an open invitation to get together whenever it works best for you. Roughly 95% of people say yes! And their "yes" tells us so much — they're interested, they're open, they're looking for connection.

**Did you know...
CUMC
averages 1
visitor per
week?**

(continued on next page)



Catalina UMC Has Grown... (continued from page 1)

by Pastor Kelli

From there, I simply get to know their story. Where are you from? How did you get to Tucson? What's your faith background? What are you looking for? Out of that conversation come natural connections — introducing them to someone I think they'd click with, pointing them towards a small group or maybe the choir or Women's Bible Study, inviting them to an upcoming event. That's it. That's the whole strategy.

This strategy to grow churches is most certainly not my idea. I watched and learned from other successful churches who built intentional discipleship pathways. I offer it so you may understand how Catalina grew in 2025 and because I believe this is one of the most vital ministries we have. If Catalina continues to grow, it will be because relationships are built one by one. Over time, that creates the kind of momentum and energy many of you have begun to feel over the last year or two.

I also offer it because, as my time at Catalina draws to a close, it would be a joy to see this ministry continue. It's incredibly effective and so enriching to life and vibrancy of our church.

Which brings me to an ask: we are looking for 5–7 volunteers to form a Welcoming Team. As part of the team, you'll help staff our Welcome Table on Sunday mornings, receive Connect Cards, and offer gift bags to first-time guests. And then the real relationship is built in the follow-up — an invitation to visit over a cup of coffee or tea, no more than an hour, just to get to know them. Do not stress about visiting a stranger—training will be provided and it's a skill that develops over time with practice and intention.

If this is something you feel called to be a part of, please let me know: kelli@catalinamethodist.org.

Friends, the harvest is plentiful! Let's keep showing up for it together.

**In 2025
24 new people
joined CUMC!**

Please join us for a "dinner-church" gathering with casual worship, Communion, and guided conversation. Please RSVP by Sunday, April 12 using this [LINK](#) or by scanning this QR-code to help us plan for food and seating. All are welcome!

April
OPEN
TABLE





*At Catalina United Methodist Church,
we work to assist the “poorest of the poor” in our community.
The need is great, but the volunteers are few.*

Primavera Men’s Shelter – Our March 28th volunteers cooked and served our five-course dinner to about 50 men at the shelter. As usual, the residents and staff were very appreciative. A big thank you to all our Primavera volunteers, many who serve this mission outreach multiple times throughout the year. We could still use several more volunteers for our cooking team on **April 25th** and the 4th Saturdays of each month thereafter. If you are interested in standing and working in the Primavera kitchen for up to four hours on the fourth Saturdays of every month in 2026, please call the church office or contact Doug Wingert at dougingert@gmail.com.

Casa Maria Soup Kitchen – We have MANY Saturday morning dates assigned to Catalina in 2026. Casa Maria has lost a lot of volunteers in recent years, so Catalina has stepped up and taken on monthly dates in 2026. Early on Saturday mornings, we cook and share our amazing chicken and vegetable soup with more than 350 neighbors living with homelessness and hunger. We now need volunteers for **April 4th**, **May 2nd** and monthly dates thereafter. We meet at Casa Maria at 6:30 am (or at least no later than 7:00 am), and the work involves standing, cooking, and serving our excellent chicken and vegetable soup in a very small kitchen for about 4 hours. We’re typically finished by 10:30 am. Interested? Please call the church office or contact Doug Wingert at dougingert@gmail.com.

Office Snack Packs – Catalina continues to offer snacks and bottled water to our homeless and hungry neighbors. Prior contributions for this outreach have been exhausted, so we are now partially funding this important mission effort through generous donations to supplement our budget.

Peanut Butter & Jelly Sandwich Making Marathon – We had 22 helpful volunteers who got together last month for our quarterly sandwich making marathon. With that many energetic volunteers, we made 550 sandwiches in just 1 ½ hours. Amazing. And the sandwiches went into sack lunches at Casa Maria for the homeless in Tucson. Thank you, Catalina volunteers, for assisting those in our neighborhoods who are living with hunger. We will do this outreach again on a Friday afternoon in June. This is an opportunity to sit, chat, and fellowship with others while spreading peanut butter and sharing the love of Christ.

Tucson Interfaith HIV-AIDS Network (TIHAN) – It is with mixed emotions that we have learned that Scott Blades, TIHAN’s long time director, will be leaving his position after 32 years of faithful service. Scott has spoken at Catalina several times over the years and has encouraged Catalina volunteers to assist TIHAN with volunteer duties, especially the annual POZ Café. A farewell get-together is planned for April 22nd. If you are interested in attending, an RSVP to the TIHAN office is required.



Holy Week Dates

April 02: Maundy Thursday – 6pm at First UMC, 915 E 4th St

April 03: Good Friday – 6pm at CUMC Sanctuary

April 05: Easter Sunday – 10am in the Sanctuary



2025 CUMC Foundation Update

by Judy Wingert, President and Cori Hoag, Treasurer

Your generous contributions to the Catalina United Methodist Foundation have provided scholarship support to students and ministry programs since 1958. Do you know someone who may be eligible for consideration? Please apply at <https://www.catalinamethodist.org/foundation/>

1)Alma Clayton Scholarship - Supports undergraduate and graduate education in degree-oriented programs to committed Christian Youth who are active members or associated with CUMC.

2)Andrew Halferty Scholarship - Supports students seeking a degree in Education and for individuals continuing their education to be certified as a teacher.

3)Briggs Scholarship - Provides scholarships for undergraduate, graduate, and vocational educational needs to young women and men who are active members of CUMC or another Methodist Church.

4)Geraldine MacKaben Scholarship for Women - Supports women pursuing their education.

5)Ministerial Scholarship - Supports those planning to enter undergraduate or graduate ministry studies. Individuals from within the Conference will be considered in the absence of applicants from CUMC.

6)Olon Keith Leathers Scholarship - Preference to students in industrial fields such as construction, welding, HVAC, automotive and computer services.

7)Sarah Williams Scholarship - Supports CUMC members or attendees pursuing an in-state or out-of-state degree in education (with preference given to those pursuing a career in Special Education) or a Health-related field. Money may be used for tuition, fees, books, room and board.

8)Webb and Jarean Bond Fund - Financial assistance to children, youth, and young adults attending District or Annual Conference camps or events, or other events deemed appropriate by CUMC.

Catalina Breakfast Forum
 Saturday, April 4, 2026
 Fellowship Hall 9 – 10 a.m.

Economic Forecast
For Tucson and Arizona



Michael Guymon,
 Chief Advocacy Officer
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2026 Where Summer Memories Are Made!

CATALINA UNITED METHODIST DAY SCHOOL

SUMMER CAMP Activities

- Scavenger Hunts
- Arts + Crafts
- Body + Mind Games
- Water Play opportunity weekly
- Shaving Cream War
- Special Visitors From Children's + Desert Museum
- Visits to Himmel Park for obstacle course fun!
- Two snacks and lunch included
- STEM Activities

STARTS MAY 26TH!

- Age 5+ (Must Complete Kinder)
- 7am-5:45pm
- \$250/Week
- \$50 Weekly Deposit (Reserve Spots)

LIMITED SPOTS- REGISTER TODAY!

Why Families Love Catalina Camp:

- Safe, neutering environment
- Small groups
- caring teachers
- Builds confidence + friendships
- Fun Learning everyday
- Trusted by families for 20 years +

Follow us
 Facebook, Catalina United Methodist Day School

Contact Us
 (520) 327-4791
 Email: Catalinadayschool@gmail.com



Catalina United Methodist Church

ART CAMP

JULY 6-10
 8AM-NOON
 AGES 4-12

Come explore bible stories through painting, beading, cooking and so much more!

QUESTIONS? PAIGE@CATALINAMETHODIST.ORG





April Observances

By Kent Batty, Multicultural Committee

Celebrate Diversity Month was initiated in 2004 to recognize and honor the diversity in the world around us: a time to understand and appreciate our differences, whether by gender, race, ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation, or other factor, while honoring *the common essence of humanity* we share. By emphasizing the appreciation of our similarities and differences, the month's designation intends to foster a deeper understanding of others, regardless of who they are, what they are, or how they live. It highlights the urgency of understanding other cultures to ensure a better world.

Diversity is crucial in assuring that we can understand each other in deeper ways that help keep us humble and open to the fact that the world does not only revolve around our beliefs and preferences. It can help develop us into better people, by increasing our understanding of human nature. The importance of diversity itself can benefit us in all aspects of our lives.

April is **Earth Month** and the 22nd is **Earth Day**. Earth Day was first designated 55 years ago! By now, we should all know its fundamental purpose: to focus attention internationally and locally on ways to protect our planet. For this year the theme remains "Our Power, Our Planet" and refers to the role of people and communities worldwide in sustaining environmental protections that affect the cost of living, public health, infrastructure reliability, and long-term stability. Environmental conditions influence food systems, water availability, energy access, disaster risk, and economic resilience across all regions. Community participation has historically shaped these outcomes across countries and political systems.

Earth Day 2026 calls on communities worldwide to take action during Earth Week to support clean air, clean water, clean energy, protected natural resources, and climate stability. These factors are directly linked to human health, economic predictability, food security, and cross-border infrastructure performance.

Finally, be aware that April 5 – 11 is Be Kind to Spiders Week!





CONGREGATIONAL CARE CORNER

March Events

By Deaconess Toni

March has been a tender and grace-filled month of caring for our beloved church family. Through several quiet visits and many warm phone conversations, I was reminded how deeply God’s love is shared in simple moments—listening, praying, and just being present with one another.

I had the sweet joy of sharing lunch with Carol West and longtime member Margo Evans. (Our pic is below!) Our time together felt like a soft blessing—full of gentle laughter, shared memories, and the comforting sense of belonging that only a church family can offer. For many of our dear ones, this truly is their family, and every visit helps them feel held close and remembered.

It continues to be a tender privilege to walk alongside these precious members, offering encouragement, prayer, and the quiet joy of Christ’s love.

In Love, Justice, and Service,
Deaconess Toni



“Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up.”

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Invite kids to a life of prayer.

[Learn More](#) THE UPPER ROOM®

He is Risen!



CATALINA DAY SCHOOL

By Carolyn Lovell, Executive Director

The Day School has been buzzing with activity and joy these past few months! Our Pre-K students kicked off the year by celebrating 100 Days of School with a cozy movie, popcorn, and pajama party—a favorite tradition that marks how much they’ve grown and learned.

In February, we hosted our Winter Raising Cane’s Fundraiser and raised \$160! These funds will go toward installing sun sails in our trike yard, helping provide shade so our children can safely enjoy outdoor play—even during the warmer months. As a Quality First center, outdoor play is essential to supporting children’s physical development, creativity, and overall well-being.

We also celebrated the Year of the Horse with our annual Chinese New Year Parade, bringing color, culture, and excitement to our campus.

March was just as vibrant! Our 3’s and Pre-K classes celebrated the Holi Festival, a traditional festival of colors that represents joy, love, and the arrival of spring. The children had so much fun in the trike yard, safely showering each other with colorful chalk and laughter.

To celebrate Read Across America Week, we held our annual Favorite Book Character Parade, where the campus came alive with beloved characters like Little Blue Truck, Pete the Cat, Captain Hook, and The Very Hungry Caterpillar, just to name a few!

Our classrooms have been exploring exciting learning themes, including fairy tales, the rodeo, and outer space, sparking imagination and curiosity every day.

As we look ahead, we are excited to welcome spring and dive into learning all about insects and the wonders of nature!



Our 3’s and Pre-K classes celebrated the Holi Festival in March



Please Be In Prayer For...

Catalina has an active prayer team, Prayer Partners, praying for YOU throughout the year. If you would like to add a special prayer request, please send it to office@catalinamethodist.org and we will publish it here!

Pease be in prayer for:

- First UMC, Safford: First UMC, Tucson; Frontera Wesley, UA, Tucson
- Peace. Love. Prayer. Always..

Need a Visitation?

If you, or someone you know, would like a visitation from our Deaconess, Toni Smith, please contact her at toni@catalinamethodist.org



UPCOMING EVENTS

Seekers Adult Sunday School Class: Sundays @ 8:45am – 9:45am in Room H230

A desire to enrich your understanding and faith is the only requirement. Join us for a variety of video-based lessons led by volunteer class members. For lesson schedule go to <https://www.catalinamethodist.org/adults/>.

Koinonia Class for Adults: Sundays @ 9am in Room E-23

Koinonia Class for adults meets in Room E23. Leader: Rev. Kirk Reed

Women's Bible Study: Wednesdays @ 9:30, Room H230

Beginning April 1, our study will be *The Gospel of Mark, The Jesus We're Aching For* by Lisa Harper. We will continue to meet in room H230 from 9:30-11:30 each Wednesday from April 1st through May 13th. Contact Brenda Halferty at bjhalferty@gmail.com or 520-481-6993 to join or for more information. It is a wonderful group of faithful, caring women. Please plan to join us!

Men's Bible Study: Wednesdays @ 6:45am, Room E23

Bible study, Brotherhood, and Breakfast! We gather for breakfast at 8am after studying! Join our Men's Bible Study each week. [Click Here](#) for a schedule of topics

Sing With The Sanctuary Choir: Rehearsals Thursdays-7-8:30pm

Do you sing in the shower? Come sing with us at rehearsals and on Sundays—it's a blast! Got questions? Reach out to Mariana@catalinamethodist.org

Festival Ringers Bell Choir: Rehearsals Thursdays @ 5:30-6:30pm

Can you read music? We would love to have you join this fun group for rehearsals and performances throughout the coming year. Reach out to Kyle@catalinamethodist.org

Catalina Breakfast Forum: Saturday, April 04, 9-10am in Fellowship Hall

Join us for breakfast and conversation as Michael Guymon presents "Economic Forecast for Tucson and Arizona." A \$4 per person donation for breakfast is appreciated. Enter thru East gate on Treat Ave.

United Women in Faith - Shalom Circle: Tuesday, April 14, 10am in the Library

We invite all women to join us in fellowship as we gather in the spirit of love, justice, and service. For questions or more information, please contact Deaconess Toni Smith at toni@catalinamethodist.org.

UMC Lay Servant Classes

All classes are open for registration at: <http://dscumc.org/lay-servant-ministries>

Registration Deadline: March 6th

For the Common Good (Spiritual Gifts) April 18 & 25

Facilitated by Linda Sterling at Christ Church UM/Tucson

Registration Deadline: April 10th

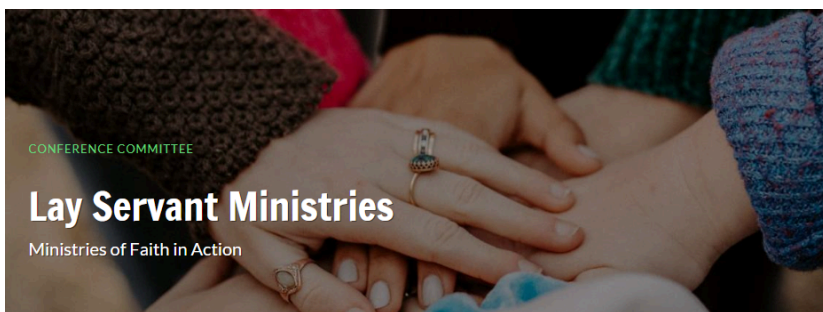
Zoom Classes -

Introduction to Lay Servant Ministries April 25, May 2 & May 9 (9am -12:30pm)

Facilitated by Susan Bowers

Leading Public Prayer & Intercessional Prayer April 19, 26 & May 3 (1:30 pm - 5pm)

Facilitated by Amy Kalm



[Click Here](https://dscumc.org/committee/lay-servant-ministries/)

[to learn more about Lay Servant Ministries
https://dscumc.org/committee/lay-servant-
ministries/](https://dscumc.org/committee/lay-servant-ministries/)

Also of Note:

www.UMC.ORG/EN

Want to know more about the United Methodist Church? You'll find it on the website link shown above. Take a look--you'll be surprised!

Catalina Cares - E-news Weekly

Are you on the email list? If not, go to: <https://www.catalinamethodist.org/newsletter/> and fill out the form at the bottom of the page. We'll add you to the list and you can stay "In the Know!" every Thursday afternoon!

Monthly Bible Verses

You can find them at: <https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/> If you would like a copy in print, please contact the office.

The Upper Room On-line

If you love the Upper Room daily devotionals in print, you're going to love them on-line! Just go to: <https://www.upperroom.org/>

Church Office Hours

The office is open Monday-Thursday, 10am to 3pm. Email: office@catalinamethodist.org Phone: 520-327-4296

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