

# United Church News



## PASTOR'S POST

*...as church, we must keep doing what we do, serving and caring for others in the name of the Lord.*

Greetings,

February always feels like a bridge month to me. The holidays are behind us, the calendar has settled slightly, and we find ourselves looking ahead toward Lent. Even before the ashes, hymns, and familiar scriptures, something begins to shift.

Lent is often described as a season of reflection, repentance, and preparation. Those are good words. But at its heart, Lent is really a season that asks something of us. It invites us to slow down just enough to notice what we usually rush past. It encourages honesty - about our lives, our faith, our relationships, and even our habits. And it gently reminds us, that growth rarely happens without intention.

People often think Lent means giving something up. For others, it means doing something new: a practice of prayer, a renewed commitment to generosity, a willingness to listen more deeply, or the courage to let go of something that no longer gives life. However we observe the season, Lent is about God's love. Not trying to earn it but instead, making room to experience more of it.

As a congregation, we will start this Lenten journey together on Ash Wednesday, February 18. I hope you will join in worship and fellowship as often as you are able. There is something powerful about moving through this holy season side by side, reminding one another that we do not walk the path of faith alone.

My prayer this February is simple: that we might notice God's presence in both the ordinary and the unexpected, and that as Lent approaches, we all feel invited - not burdened - into a deeper awareness of God's ever-present grace and love.

Blessed by God, we journey on.

Peace,

*Pastor Brady*

### Lenten Schedule 2026



#### Community Ash Wednesday ~ February 18, 2026

Wednesday, 12:00 noon  
First Presbyterian Church  
(12225 N 103rd Ave., Sun City)

#### Palm Sunday ~ March 29, 2026

Sunday 10:00 am UCCSC  
Easter Cantata with Phoenix Symphony

#### Maundy Thursday ~ April 2, 2026

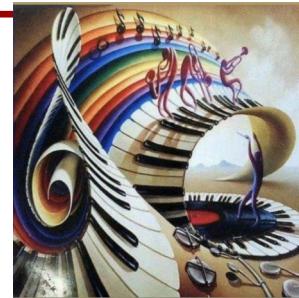
Thursday, 5:00 pm  
United Church of Sun City

#### Good Friday ~ April 3, 2026

Easter Sunday ~ April 5, 2026  
7:00 am Sunrise Service at the Sun Bowl, SC  
10:00 am Easter Brunch Service UCCSC



UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST  
God is still speaking.



## *Greetings from your Music Ministry!*

Hopefully, I'm finished putting away all of our Christmas music because it's already time to plan for Lent and Easter music!

But first, we have a wonderful free will concert planned for our Valentine's Day weekend featuring the popular women's trio known as "TLC" or "Tender Loving Crooners" featuring our own Caryl Leander and two equally talented friends on **Sunday, February 15 at 3:00 pm!**

This wonderful performance (think 'modern-day Andrews Sisters') will be followed by a delicious SPAGHETTI DINNER for only \$10.00 each. Please purchase your spaghetti dinner ticket in advance, at a table near the back of our sanctuary or at the church office. The concert is a free will offering. This is a great opportunity to invite friends and neighbors to our church!



LENT begins with ASH WEDNESDAY on **February 18** already! Ash Wednesday worship will be at First Presbyterian Church (12225 N 103rd Ave., Sun City) at 12:00 noon. Rev. Brady Abel will be participating in this Ecumenical Service. Our Choir and Praise Team not only have beautifully written music to share with you each Sunday in Lent, but of course one of the highlights will be our CANTATA on PALM SUNDAY, **March 29**, at our 10:00 am service. This year's Cantata is entitled *Come, Touch the Robe* composed by one of our favorite composers, Pepper Choplin. We will be joined by some special guest singers, and members of the Phoenix Symphony! Again, a wonderful, inspirational time to invite people who might be new to our church or community.

Looking Ahead...

Holy Week will include a MAUNDY THURSDAY service at our church at 5:00 pm on **Thursday, April 2** with special music by our Praise Team.

**April 5:** EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE at the Sun Bowl, a few blocks south of our church at 7:00 am, plus an informal Easter Sunday Brunch gathering at 10:00 am in our sanctuary.

**April 12:** HOLY HUMOR SUNDAY!

A personal note: my partner, Greg Yagi, and I have been so touched and moved by the outpouring of love, prayers and concern during the long illness and death of his dear mother, Nancy Yagi. We both feel so blessed that United Church is our church home, because of all of you, our friends. "God brings us to church to multiply our joys and divide our sorrows."



God bless you!

*Alan Paulson*

Minister of Music

Photo Credit: Greg Yagi

**Suggestions? Requests? Text 602-427-7035 or [alanpaulson1@gmail.com](mailto:alanpaulson1@gmail.com)**



## Greetings from your Parish Nurse....

Do you know what you call a can opener that doesn't work? A can't opener! I hope I got a few chuckles with that joke or maybe at least a few groans. But today I want to talk to you about laughter. We all know having a good laugh makes us feel better. But did you know that laughter significantly benefits your physical, mental, emotional health as well as your social well-being? Let's take a look.

### **The physical benefits of laughter include:**

Stress relief and muscle relaxation - Laughter activates and then calms the stress response, relaxing muscles for up to 45 minutes.

Immune System Boost – Laughter also lowers stress hormones and increases immune cells and antibodies which fight infections.

Heart Health – Laughter improves blood vessel function and blood flow, which can help lower blood pressure and protect against cardiovascular problems.

Pain Relief – It releases endorphins, the body's natural painkillers.

Oxygenation – Laughter increases oxygen intake, stimulating the heart, lungs, and muscles, and improving circulation.

### **Mental and emotional benefits affected by laughter include:**

Mood Enhancement – Laughter releases dopamine and serotonin which help to combat anxiety, depression and anger.

Improved Memory and Creativity – By reducing cortisol, laughter may improve short-term memory and encourage creative thinking.

Enhanced Resilience – A sense of humor helps you gain perspective on challenges and to bounce back more easily.

### **There are also social benefits to laughter:**

Strengthens Relationships – Sharing a laugh creates positive bonds, fosters belonging, and helps people connect. It also helps in diffusing conflicts and improving relationship satisfaction.

Improves Approachability – Laughter makes you seem more approachable and helps build strong social bonds.

Longevity – Studies suggest a strong sense of humor may contribute to a longer life.

So go out and find something to laugh about today! Spend some time with friends that make you laugh. Or read a funny book. Or watch an old slapstick movie.

Whatever it takes, make it happen! Because we all know "Laughter is the best medicine".

**Lisa Dunbar, Parish Nurse**



On Tuesday, **January 13th, 2026** at 10:30 am in the Beehive, Nutritionist Sarah Fagus talked about ***Living Well with Diabetes***. Sarah gave a presentation on the basics of diabetes, the impact it can have on our overall health, and practical strategies to help manage the condition.



Photo Credit: Robin Lemkuil

#### UNDERSTANDING MEDICARE



Join us on **Tuesday, February 10 at 10:30 am** for **Understanding Medicare**. Learning about Medicare can be overwhelming. Deborah Bates, owner and educator at Bates Retirement Services, will discuss how and when to enroll in Medicare, what is and is not covered, and the pros and cons of Medicare Advantage Plans and Medicare Supplemental Insurance.

**A MATTER OF BALANCE CLASS:** A.T. Still University has begun classes here at United Church, to discuss practical strategies for managing fall risks including balance, flexibility, and strength exercise to enable increased activity. These free classes are being held on Fridays, through March 6. Pre-registration was required. This class is usually offered every year in January, so if you missed this year, be sure to sign up next year!



Photo Credit: Robin Lemkuil

**FEBRUARY 8, 2026**  
**11:00 AM**

## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The United Church of Sun City Annual Membership Meeting will be held after our 10:00 am worship service on:

**Sunday, February 8.**

There are several items that will be discussed for a vote including a change to the Church Bylaws, the 2026 budget and the slate of officers for 2026.

A quorum of 25% membership is required, so your vote counts!

Please plan on attending this important meeting and make a difference in the life of your Church.

(Guests are welcome to attend without vote.)



# Sunday, February 15, 2026

TLC Concert begins at 3:00 pm  
(Freewill offering will be collected for the concert)

**AND...**

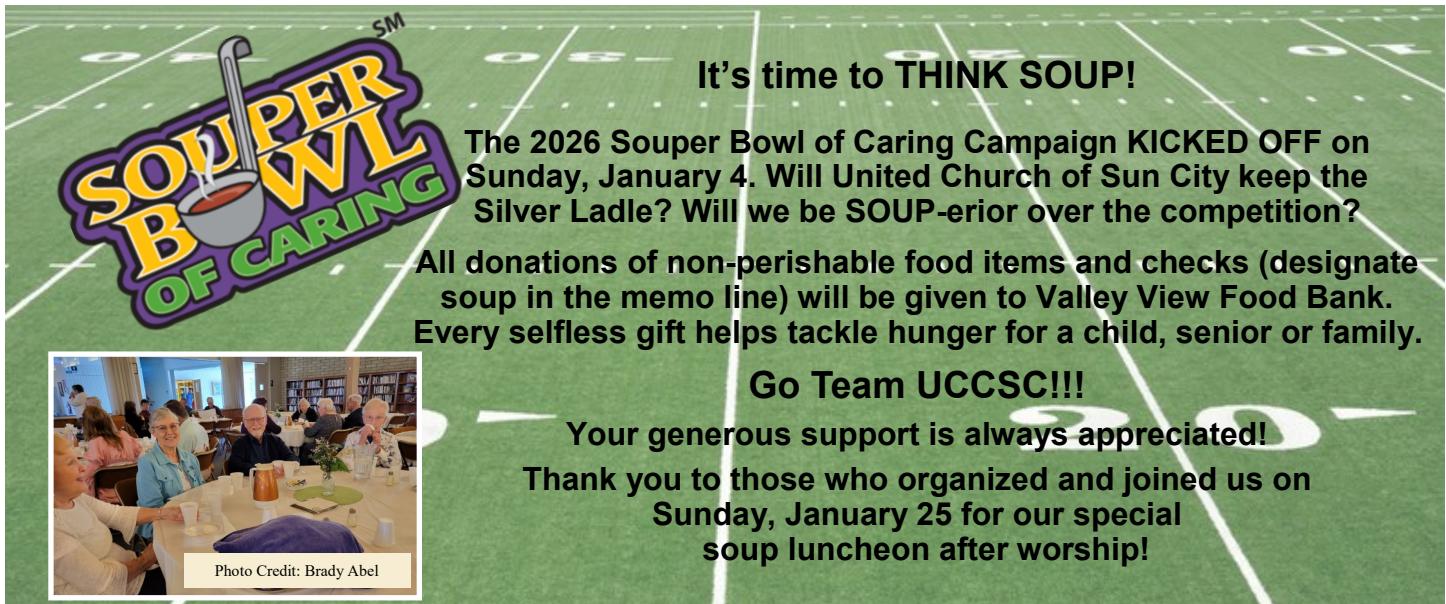
Get your tickets now for the  
Spaghetti Dinner  
following the TLC Concert!

(tickets are available Sunday mornings  
or by visiting the church office)



Spaghetti Dinner Ticket **\$10.00** per person  
♥ Buy a ticket for your sweetheart,  
friends or neighbors! ♥

*All proceeds will go to the A/V Upgrade Project*



## Paint Tutorial

On **Monday, January 12** nine brave souls joined together for Julie Larsson's Paint Tutorial class. Julie joined us compliments of The Ridges and shared her artistic talents with us as we attempted to paint a red fox resting in the woods during winter. Each of us created our own masterpieces and had a few laughs as we attempted to make our fox look like an actual fox along with the challenges of the trees, background and snow! Julie's step-by-step instructions along with supplying all the art materials, resulted in a fun-filled morning allowing us to forget, for a little while, everything else going on in the world.



Photo Credit: Julie Larsson



# *Greetings to United Church of Sun City!*

It was wonderful seeing and visiting with all of you during my visit in December. Praise God I was able to make the trip there and back home. Also, a huge thanks to Brady for being so kind and helpful to me!

I loved the Christmas Cantata and the Phoenix Symphony, the cookie walk, and the very meaningful Christmas Eve Service. They were all very, very special events. Thank you to everyone who were responsible for them!

I also appreciate the kindness and concern shown to me. I am continuing to improve slowly, but surely. Love to all, and I wish you a blessed 2026! Your friend forever!

Betty Abel.

## COMMUNION at United Church

Please join us on  
Sunday, February 1  
at 10:00 am.

All are Welcome!



Are you in need of

## Pastoral Care

Please contact  
the Church office  
at 623-933-0058.

## SILVER SNEAKERS CLASSES

Led by Ginger Dawson, Certified Instructor

**Tuesday/Thursday**

**Strength & Balance Class  
at 1:00 pm!**



SilverSneakers will  
be offering the  
Strength & Balance Class  
**Tuesdays/Thursdays at  
1:00 pm only.**

Join us in the Beehive  
and invite others to  
join with you.

Contact Ginger Dawson  
at 623-695-6489

Join us for our Community  
Ash Wednesday Worship  
at First Presbyterian Church  
(12225 N 103rd Ave., Sun City)

## Ash Wednesday

12:00 Noon on  
**Wednesday, February 18, 2026.**

Rev. Ann Utke will be officiating.  
Rev. Brady Abel and pastors  
from our sister congregations  
will be participating.

Please make it a priority to  
attend this worship service to  
begin our Lenten journey  
to the cross.



The deadline for the  
**March** Newsletter:  
**Monday, February 16.**

Please submit your  
articles to Robin at:  
[office@uccsc.com](mailto:office@uccsc.com).

*Remember to check the  
calendar for special events.*

If you would like to have an article  
submitted in the Sun City Newspaper  
*The Independent*, please forward your  
articles to Robin in the Church office  
the Monday of the week before you  
want it published.

Send your information to Robin at  
[office@uccsc.com](mailto:office@uccsc.com).

## Find the Cross

Each month we will hide a cross  
somewhere in the Newsletter.  
Either in the writing, in a picture,  
it could be anywhere!  
Enjoy trying to find it  
but don't tell your friends..  
they will have to find it on their own!

(January location was on the Video Village page,  
at the bottom in AV Experts.)

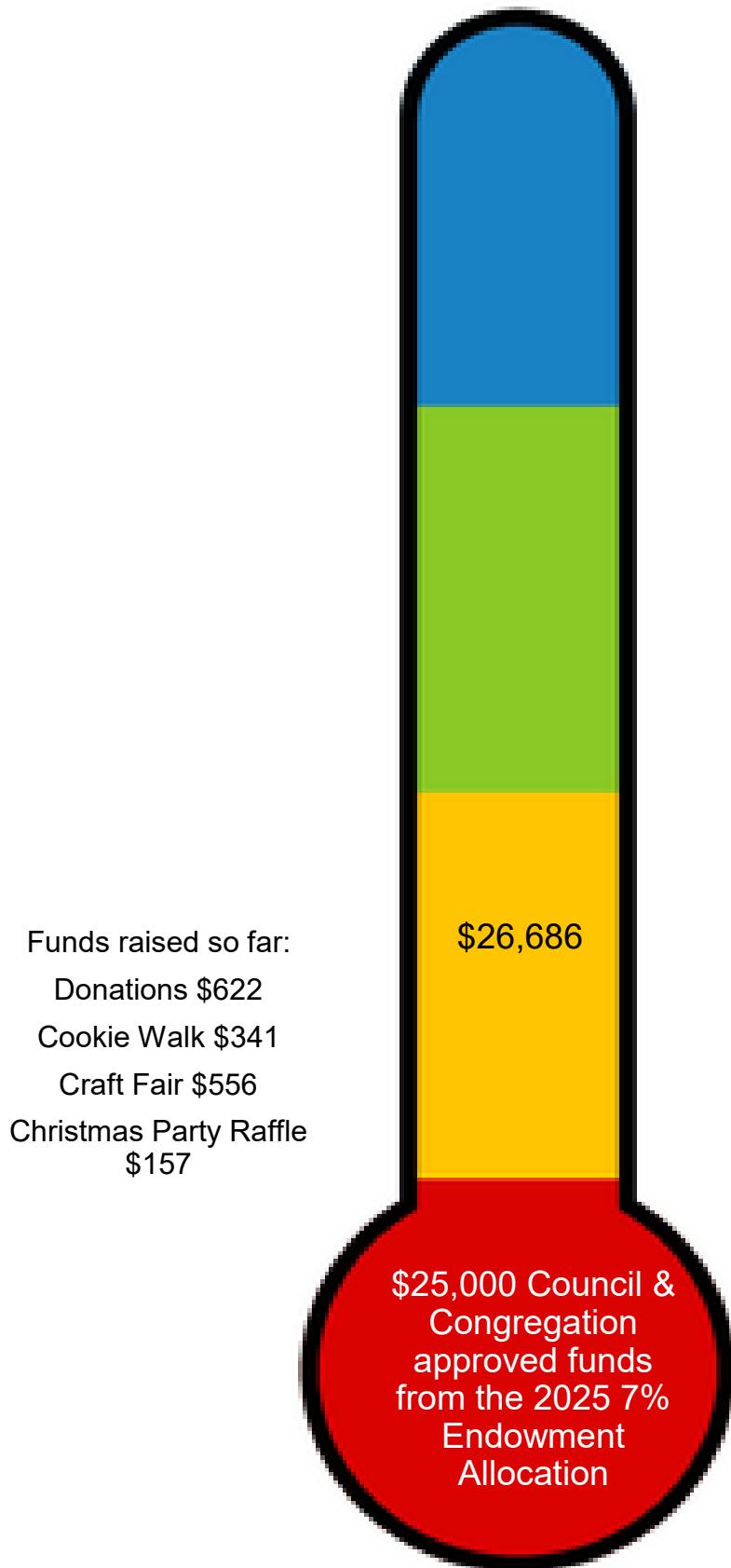
Be sure to mark your calendars and  
invite your Sweetheart for the Valentine  
TLC Concert and Spaghetti Dinner on  
Sunday,  
February 15  
beginning at 3pm



(Tickets for the dinner are on sale now \$10.00 per person)



## \$54,300 Goal!



\$4,800

Replace and upgrade Video Projector to a Laser projector

\$15,700

Additional Point and Zoom Cameras and updated camera program.

\$15,500

Replace and upgrade wireless mics and mic systems with recharging stations

\$18,300

Replace and upgrade the digital sound board, stage monitors and sound system processor.



## February

### BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

Hedy Hall	2/01
Jim Smithback	2/05
Craig Zimmerman	2/06
Dennis Bates	2/08
Elizabeth Burke	2/08
Peggy Barth	2/13
Nancy Wohlhuter	2/13
Terri Behl	2/14
Dwight Ammeson	2/16
Steve Gahm	2/19
Mary Lynn Heyne	2/22
Arlen Freeman	2/24

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

Korby & Sheri Spishak-Spielberger

2/14

### A special note from Bud and Mary Sue Andreason

*Bud and I have moved to Palos Verdes Independent Living (18441 N 87th Dr., Peoria AZ, Apt. #317). We have decided that after 62 years, we shouldn't be separated. They have so much to offer, I think both of us will be much better off.*



*I would like to thank everyone that has been so kind and encouraging, it really has meant the world to us. The prayers and all the other help, we are just so grateful to each and every one of you.*

*We won't be back to church for a while, but hopefully someday soon. We have been members for at least 18 years. We were the "young ones" when we joined. So glad we have had so many new people join now. May God Bless each and every one of you, **where everyone is someone special**. That is what brought us to the church having that saying on the sign outside.*

Bud and Mary Sue



### Ladies Lunch Bunch

Thursday, February 12, 2026 at 1:00 pm

George's Lakeview Café.

10502 W. Thunderbird Blvd., Sun City

**HAPPY Valentines Day!**

**All are welcome!**

Please RSVP Hedy Hall or the Church office

Meets Tuesday,  
February 3 at 8:00 am



# February 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Satur-
1 8:00 Praise Team 8:40 Choir Practice 10:00 am Worship with Holy Communion Worship online  Soup Collection for Souper Bowl of Caring	2 1:00 pm Walking group 2:00 pm TAI CHI in the Beehive	3 1:00 pm SilverSneakers Exercise Class in the Beehive  8:00 am Men's Breakfast George's Lakeview Cafe	4 10:00 Converse and Connect 12:00 Power of the Pause 1:00 pm Walking group	5 11:00 am Bible study Pastor's study 1:00 pm SilverSneakers Exercise Class in Beehive	6 OFFICE CLOSED  9:30 am Matter of Balance	7 OFFICE CLOSED
8 8:00 Praise Team 8:40 Choir Practice 10:00 am Worship and Holy Communion Worship online  Soup Collection for Souper Bowl of Caring	9 1:00 pm Walking group 2:00 pm TAI CHI in the Beehive  2:00 Activities Board Meeting	10 10:30 am Sun Health Understanding Medicare  1:00 pm SilverSneakers Exercise Class in the Beehive	11 10:00 Converse and Connect 12:00 Power of the Pause 1:00 pm Walking group	12 11:00 am Bible study Pastor's study 1:00 pm SilverSneakers Exercise Class in Beehive  1:00 pm Lade's Lunch at George's Cafe	13 OFFICE CLOSED  9:30 am Matter of Balance	14 OFFICE CLOSED
15 8:00 Praise Team 8:40 Choir Practice 10:00 am Worship Worship online  3:00 pm Valentine's Concert and Spaghetti Dinner  	16 Newsletter Deadline 1:00 pm Walking group 2:00 pm TAI CHI in the Beehive	17 1:00 pm SilverSneakers Exercise Class in the Beehive	18 Ash Wednesday 10:00 Converse and Connect 12:00 Power of the Pause 12:00 Ash Wednesday service (see below) 1:00 pm Walking group	19 11:00 am Bible study Pastor's study 1:00 pm SilverSneakers Exercise Class in Beehive 9:00 Finance Meeting 9:00 Mission Meeting 10:00 Council Meeting	20 OFFICE CLOSED  9:30 am Matter of Balance	21 OFFICE CLOSED
22 8:00 Praise Team 8:40 Choir Practice 10:00 am Worship Worship online	23 1:00 pm Walking group 2:00 pm TAI CHI in the Beehive	24 1:00 pm SilverSneakers Exercise Class in the Beehive	25 10:00 Converse and Connect 12:00 Power of the Pause 1:00 pm Walking group	26 11:00 am Bible study Pastor's study 1:00 pm SilverSneakers Exercise Class in Beehive	27 OFFICE CLOSED  9:30 am Matter of Balance	28 OFFICE CLOSED



Get your tickets now for the Valentine Spaghetti Dinner!  
Only \$10.00 per person on sale Sunday mornings after worship or in the church office.

TLC Concert (free will offering) will be at 3:00 pm, buy your ticket and stay for the spaghetti dinner after the concert!



Join us for Ash Wednesday Worship on February 18, 2026 at 12:00 noon.

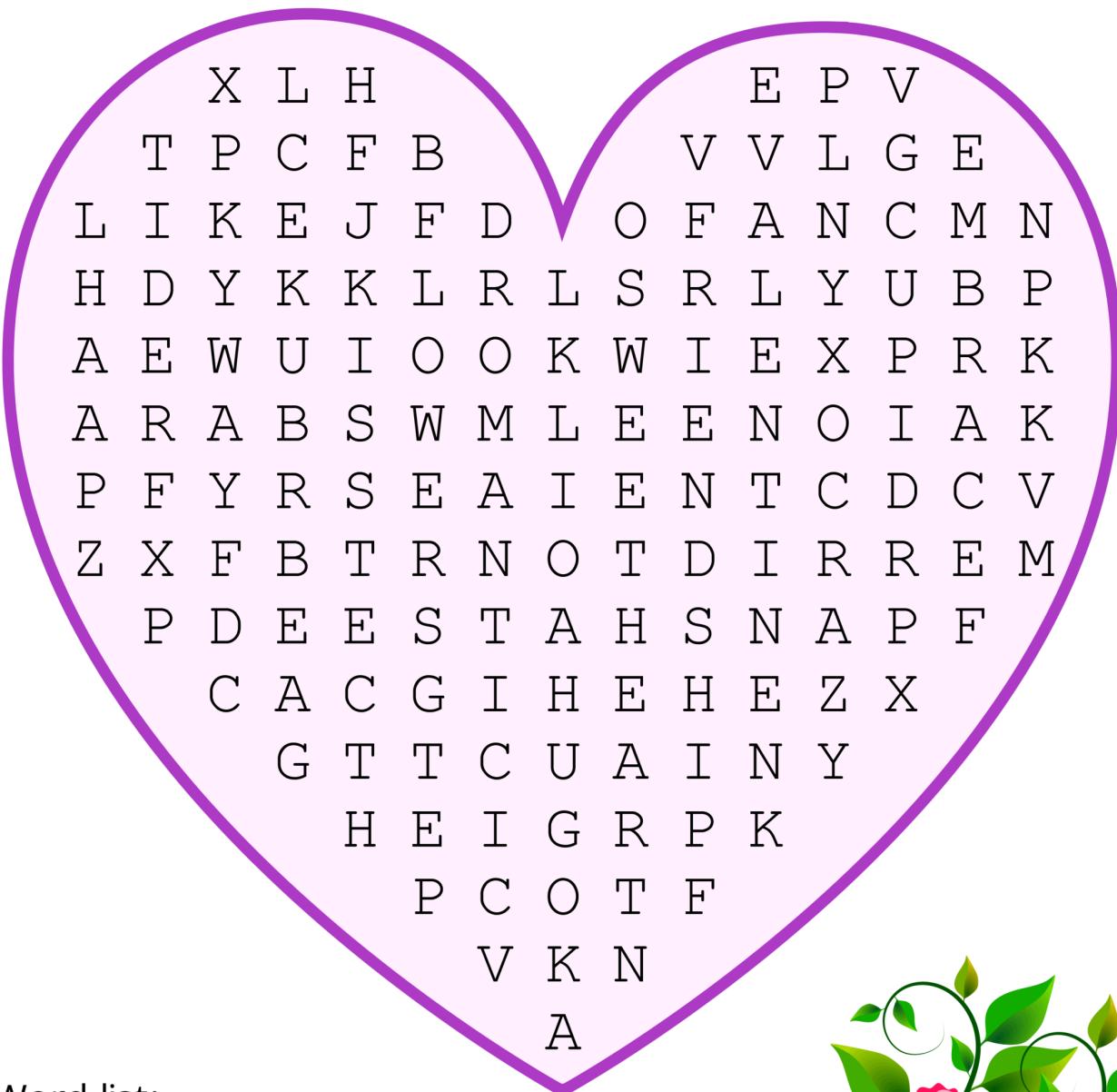
Hosted by First Presbyterian Church, this Community Worship Service will be officiated by Rev. Ann Utke. Pastor Brady along with pastors from our sister congregations will participate.

First Presbyterian Church is located at 12225 N 103rd. Ave., Sun City. Please contact them for questions regarding the service or accessibility at 623-974-3605.

# Valentine's Day Word Search

# Word Search

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## Word list:

AFFECTION  
CRAZY  
CUPID  
DATE  
EMBRACE

FLOWERS  
FRIENDSHIP  
HEART  
HUG  
KISS

LIKE  
LOVE  
ROMANTIC  
SWEETHEART  
VALENTINE



*United Church of Sun City*  
11250 N. 107th Ave., Ste. 105  
Sun City, AZ 85351



February 2026

#### STAFF:

**Rev. Brady Abel, Senior Pastor**  
**Greg Bradley, Moderator**  
**Heather Purtle, Vice Moderator**  
**Bill Zimmer, Past Moderator**  
**Alan Paulson, Minister of Music**  
**Beverly Fletcher, Organist**

**Praise Team:** Kira Kadel-Funk, Brenda Goodenberger, Michael Nanney  
Robin Lemkuil Office Manager/Asst. to the Pastor  
Craig Zimmerman & Boni Locke, Office Assistants  
Lisa Dunbar, Parish Nurse  
Dickie Duniver, Custodian  
Holly Lentini, Assistant Custodian  
Greg Yagi, Lester Atkinson and Robin Lemkuil, Audio/Video Tech

**All Members & Friends of United Church, Ministers of the Good News**

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**Office Hours 8:30 am to 1:30 pm —Monday through Thursday**

**The office is closed on Friday and Major Holidays**

**Sunday Worship Service 10 am in the Sanctuary and also online.**

**Coffee Fellowship—After Worship**

**Communion the 1st Sunday of each Month**

**Bible Study—Thursday 11:00 am each week**

**Phone: 623-933-0058**

**Email: [Office@uccsc.com](mailto:Office@uccsc.com)**

**Website: [uccsc.com](http://uccsc.com)**

**Facebook: United Church of Sun City**

**YouTube: United Church of Sun City**

