

October
through
December
2025

DHLC Compass

Next Steps in Your Faith Journey



Changes in the Sanctuary

Making the area brighter

Desert Hills Lutheran Church put the capital expenses approved by the congregation to use this year, enhancing the sanctuary's sound and lighting for those worshipping in-person and online.

It was at the forefront of Troy Justesen's mind over the last few years of how we could improve the worship experience for our congregation, celebrating with us each weekend in-person and online. He worked extensively with Arizona Pro Sound, Inc, to figure out the cost and timeline for installing new equipment that would last DHLC for some years to come. The lighting that was replaced, as an example, was difficult to find bulbs for. Now, the sanctuary is brightly lit, the sound is clear, and the viewing experience is better.

We hope Troy would be pleased with these updates, as we honored him throughout the recent renovations. The goal is to complete updates to the Overson Chapel and the Lokken Fellowship Hall in the months ahead.



Holiday Traditions

Celebrating with our families

Holiday traditions are diverse and vary from family to family and culture to culture. Often including activities like decorating a Christmas tree, baking cookies, exchanging gifts, and enjoying festive meals, many families also have unique traditions that they celebrate each year.

Learn how the staff at DHLC celebrate the holidays with their families and friends.

"Our Christmas tradition was to go out and cut down our own Christmas tree either out in the woods or at a Christmas tree farm. It would then take days for us to completely decorate it as we would place each tinsel strand on the tree by hand." - Pastor Mike

"Suzanne and I stay in our Christmas pajamas, made by my mom, all day long on Christmas Day. Even when we used to pick up Suzanne's mom in her pajamas, we wore ours out and about." - Pastor Craig

"Growing up, my siblings and I were allowed to check our Christmas stockings when we woke up, but we were not allowed to open gifts from family or Santa until after Christmas worship services. This is a tradition my husband and I continued with our children." - Mary McNichols

"Growing up in Queens, New York, I was lucky because our house had a chimney with a fireplace, so Santa had a way in. One mid-December, I was in my basement, saw a little window in the middle of the house and decided to open it as I was curious. To my surprise, there were all the wrapped Christmas gifts lying on the sand foundation! I used to say when we opened the gifts,

how strange it was that Santa's handwriting was the same as my mom's. I kept that observation to myself as my brother was six years younger and I didn't want to ruin it for him." - Christine Kelly-Sminmo

"As far back as I can remember, my family would gather to make Tamales for Christmas dinner. On Christmas Eve, we would prepare all the ingredients and make the tamales that day. Everyone would then go to the Christmas tree, pick one gift to open, and watch "A Christmas Story" on TV. On Christmas morning, we would steam or cook the tamales and enjoy them for Christmas dinner." - Mark Soto

"When our four sons were little, I would make a huge batch of sugar cookies the week before Christmas. Among the delicious cookie scents and in the cozy warmth of the kitchen, I would set the entire kitchen table up as a cookie decorating workshop. It was a meaningful, fun mess. The boys loved it! Now that they are becoming adults themselves, we still do this, but on a smaller scale with much less mess." - Annie Vrooman

"Growing up in a large family—11 children—celebrating Christmas on Christmas Day was challenging. We would celebrate on Christmas Eve with a family dinner, open presents, and enjoy family time together. Later in life, while raising our kids some distance from their grandparents, we continued this tradition by having our kids open "Out of Town" presents on Christmas Eve and then celebrating Christmas morning together." - Chaplain Mark

Holiday Boutique

Sewing Bee

Sewing Bee's Fall Boutique, featuring homemade jewelry, home décor, purses, kitchen items, and, of course, quilts, will be held Saturday, November 8, and Sunday, November 9. You won't want to miss this chance to buy unique gifts for everyone on your Christmas list. All proceeds support local charities.

40 Years in November

For 40 years, DHLC has been strong and thriving in the Green Valley community. Watch for mailings coming soon to see how you can help DHLC continue to support our community and make a difference in the years to come.

Baked Goods Galore

Women's Ministry

The Women's Ministry will host the Sweet Spot with lots of delicious treats at the Fall Boutique on November 8. Come and explore. You are sure to find something sweet for yourself or as a hostess gift during the holidays.

Celebrating Holidays at Desert Hills

Stepping into holiday traditions at DHLC

Holidays are a special time of year at Desert Hills Lutheran Church! We look forward to sharing our church traditions with you each year.

Don't want to cook a big dinner? Reserve your place at the **Thanksgiving Dinner** that Chef Bernie and crew will prepare and serve at 2 pm in the Fellowship Hall on Thanksgiving Day.

The Advent Season leading up to Christmas offers more once-a-year favorites. The Global Mission's Good Gifts are the first two weekends of December.

The Christmas Concert is on Thursday, December 11, at 4 pm in the sanctuary. Enjoy all the choirs of Desert Hills and join in singing some Christmas carols. Make this a new tradition, if it isn't one already!

The Tree of Remembrance will be displayed in the church lobby across from the front desk. Be sure to add your loved ones' names who have passed on.

Surviving the Holidays will be offered on Sunday, November 9, from 2-4 pm in the Overson Chapel. Guidance is offered for those grieving during the holidays.

A Blue Christmas Service will be held on Wednesday, December 17, at 5 pm in the sanctuary.

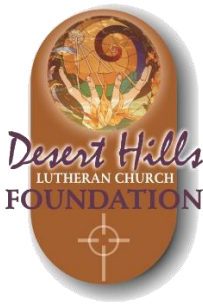
Christmas Eve Services:

- 1 pm Country Christmas Eve Service
- 3 pm Country Christmas Eve Service
- 5 pm Candlelight Christmas Eve Service
- 7 pm Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

Christmas Eve Dinner will be served at 2 pm in the Fellowship Hall. What a wonderful way to both worship and enjoy a meal with fellowship. No need to dirty your kitchen.

Christmas Day Service:

10 am Christmas Day Service with Communion



Pastor Maria Markman, Grace Lutheran Church in Andover, MN, was a Foundation scholarship recipient.

We Continue to Give Scholarships and Legacy Giving

Our DHLC Foundation Board recently made a big decision to increase the number of scholarships for ELCA seminary students from three to four! “We were able to do this because of the generosity of church members and the amazing returns on our investments,” said Board Chairman Jon Fogg.

Three of the four scholarships will be awarded to Luther Seminary students, while the fourth will go to Wartburg Seminary students. The Board also decided to honor our current and past pastors by naming the awards after them. Two of the three scholarships for Luther will be awarded in the names of Martin Overson and Craig Larson, both of whom are graduates of Luther. The new Wartburg scholarship will be named in honor of Michael Sager, a Wartburg alumnus.

In addition to scholarships, the Board has been focusing on legacy gifting, which involves remembering the Foundation in

our estate planning. Once we're gone, we want to ensure that our last check goes to Desert Hills Lutheran Church. By including the Foundation in our end-of-life planning, we can make a lasting impact on our church.

Even small contributions can accumulate to significant amounts. For instance, in each of the last three years, approximately 50 church members have passed away. If most of them had left \$1,000 to the Foundation, in ten years, that \$150,000 could grow to \$332,000! That's enough to create at least one more scholarship and provide funds for local Christian education and capital improvements at the church.

Legacy gifts, both large and small, can make a significant impact. If you want to find out more about the Foundation and how to start your legacy giving, please reach out to the church office or Lisa Higginbotham at lisa.higginbotham@elca.org.

Opportunities to Give Helping others during the holidays

During the holidays, we often think of others and how we can share what God provided us with others. Here are some opportunities at DHLC to help those in need.

Can you help restock their pantry? Crossroads Nogales Mission in Nogales, Arizona, is a Christ-centered, non-profit shelter that offers help, hope, compassionate care, and recovery to disadvantaged men, women, and families who are homeless or in need of assistance. Bring donations of unopened rice, beans, and canned goods from October 11-19.

During the first weekend of each month, a food drive is held at DHLC to support our community food banks. Unopened, non-perishable food is collected to help residents in need.

The annual offering of ELCA Good Gifts will be on the weekends of December 6-7 and December 13-14. You make a difference when you select a good gift or two that help people in need around the world. Not sure what to give that hard-to-buy-for person on your list? How about some chicks, a cow, or a goat?

