



# In Touch

Fountain Hills Presbyterian Church

## Brendan Wagner | Elder of Missions



Wow! I can't believe we are already approaching the Lenten Season!

In terms of Missions, we are just starting another exciting year. We are moving our meetings from Monday afternoons to Saturday mornings.

This will be an adjustment, but I am confident we will continue to work together doing good works and spreading God's word through example.

One of our most successful and important missions is led by our Community House Meal team: Kim Caputo, Debbie Olson and Christine Colley. Under their leadership and with the help of several of our FHPC members (and children/grandchildren of Kim and Christine) a few hundred friends have been served nutritious meals at Community House at South Scottsdale Presbyterian Church in the past

several months. The Team plans to serve meals on the 5<sup>th</sup> Mondays of March, June, August and November of this year. We will have sign up sheets for Volunteers at the Connect Desk each Sunday, and encourage you to consider taking part in this mission.

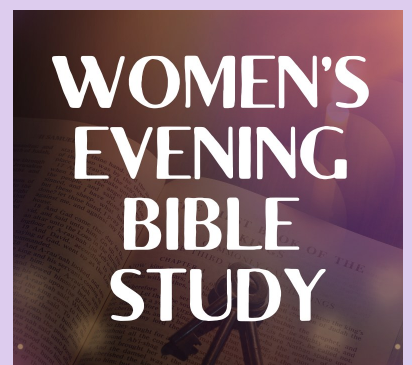
Of course, the Mission Team has many more projects planned this year, including supporting Boys and Girls Club, Reigning Grace Ranch, Phoenix Rescue, Extended Hands Food Bank, SAW's and many, many more!

We will be sure to keep you informed. If you are interested in getting involved, please reach out to me or plan to attend our next meeting at 10:00 am on Saturday, February 21 in the Office.

God Bless,  
Brendan Wagner  
Elder of Missions

### Women's Evening Bible Study is back!

Join us **Tuesday, February 17 at 6:00 p.m.** with a casual evening of fellowship, refreshments, and an overview of our upcoming study of **I John**. We meet on the **first and third Tuesdays at 17152 E. Kensington Place, Fountain Hills**. If you're not currently part of a Bible study—or just have questions—you're warmly invited to join us. For more information, contact **Jeanette Simmons (480-577-3162)**.



**OUR STAFF**

**Pastor Jim Rizer**  
pastorjim@fhpresby.org

**Eric Williamson**  
office@fhpresby.org

**Linda Lull**  
*Treasurer*

**Debbie Fisher**  
*Director of Music*

**Dorothy Parris** Pianist

**Steve Trommer**  
*Custodian*

**CHURCH SESSION**

**MaryAnn O'Connor**  
*Clerk of Session*

**Phyllis Kern | Finance**  
**Sandi Thompson |**  
**Fellowship-Assimilation**  
**Brendan Wagner | Mission**  
*Class of 2026*

**MaryAnn O'Connor |**  
**Worship & Music**  
*Class of 2027*

**Larry Cole | B&G**  
**Dean Preising |**  
**Communications**  
*Class of 2028*

**BOARD OF DEACONS**

**Jeannette Simmons**  
*Class of 2026*

**Susan Titus, Moderator**  
**Ilene Berg, Jean Linzer**  
**Suzanne Ottoson**  
*Class of 2027*

**Monique Reynolds, Terri**  
**Schmidt, Barbara**  
**Hoverland**  
*Class of 2028*

13001 N. Fountain Hills Blvd,  
Fountain Hills, AZ 85268  
www.fhpresbyterian.info

**Focus on Finance | 2025**

December Income	\$ 59,351	Budget	\$ 38,403
December Expenses	\$ 42,105	Budget	\$ 39,371
YTD Income	\$ 464,784	YTD Budget	\$ 460,990
YTD Expense	\$ 447,958	YTD Budget	\$ 475,429
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ 16,826		\$ (14,439)

**Finance Report | Linda Lull, Treasurer**

The year **2025** ended in a positive position compared to the initial budget projection, which began the year with a deficit. In December, we paid off the **remaining mortgage balance** using funds saved in the General Fund savings account.

At the end of December, we had **\$40,700** in the **General Fund checking account**, reserved for January expenditures—placing us in a very strong position as we begin the new year.

Thank you for faithfully maintaining your pledges and contributions in support of the **missions and ongoing operations of FHPC**. We truly appreciate your commitment.

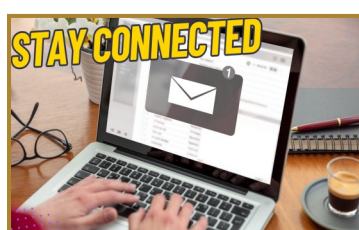
It is not too late to submit a **pledge for 2026** if you have not yet done so. You may also wish to consider using **Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs)** from your IRA toward your pledge. These count as a **credit rather than a tax deduction**. Please consult your financial advisor to determine whether this option is appropriate for your personal situation.

**FHPC eGiving is Safe and Easy**



FHPC offers church members and supporters a convenient way to express their generosity online through our eGiving portal. To get started, sign up today at [www.fhpresbyterian.info](http://www.fhpresbyterian.info). Look for the Giving Box image at the top right or click "Giving" in the top menu.

You can also use the Vanco Mobile app to give directly from your phone. For instructions, please refer to the eGiving Help section.



**STAY CONNECTED WITH FHPC!**

Make sure you're getting our latest news and updates. Subscribe to our email list at: [www.fhpresbyterian.info](http://www.fhpresbyterian.info) or contact the church office at **480-837-1763** or [office@fhpresby.org](mailto:office@fhpresby.org).



Love God – Love People – Make Disciples



## Ash Wednesday Worship Service 6 PM



This year we will mark our entry into Lent with a corporate **Ash Wednesday Worship Service at 6pm on February 18**. The aim of Ash Wednesday worship is threefold: to meditate on our mortality, sinfulness, and need of a savior; renew our commitment to daily repentance in the Lenten season and in all of life; and to remember with confidence and gratitude that Christ has conquered death and sin. This service will include the imposition of ashes.

## New Lenten Opportunity: *Try A Small Group!*

As you contemplate how you would like to draw nearer to Christ this Lenten Season, I want to invite you to consider taking on something new by joining a small group. The small groups will meet for the six weeks of Lent and will begin the week of February 22. The groups will run roughly an hour and will discuss the questions in the “I Am” study guide.



### **Why try a small group?**

- Small groups give God the opportunity to write His word on your heart in a different way. The sermon passage will be the same as that week’s small group passage. This gives God three opportunities; the sermon, your preparation for group, and the group discussion; to enrich your understanding and write His word on your heart.
- Small groups are relational. The groups will ideally be 8-10 people. This is an excellent opportunity to get to know others and deepen our connections in the congregation.
- Small groups are more accessible. Our small groups will meet at a variety of times during the week as compared to a Bible study or a worship service. This allows more people to participate.
- Small groups are versatile and effective ways for discipleship formation. This is the model that Jesus used to shape the twelve apostles.

Please consider participating in a small group this Lenten season. On February 15 you will be able to pick up your study guide and sign up for the small group time that works best for you.

## Pastor's Pen | Jim Rizer



### Lent: Wonderfully Inconvenient

“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.” Matthew 4:1-2

These two verses are reminiscent of the season ending cliff hanger of a favorite show. In the midst of an unfolding drama, we are told to wait. In the larger context of Matthew, the spotlight centers on Jesus in His baptism at the end of chapter 3. Next, we are told that Jesus is led into the wilderness by the spirit for the first confrontation with the devil. Then we are told the next episode is 40 days away. (I have always thought that there should be a return, or 40, between verse 2 and 3).

Although it feels like “ready, set, wait” there is something larger at work. The 40 days in the wilderness are not so much a pause, but preparation. Jesus spends this time away from others, away from the comforts of home, away from broken ways of the world. In doing so He confirms His focus and reliance on the Father.

The season of Lent is based on this season of preparation as we ready our hearts to better understand the gift of the cross and the empty tomb. Much like our favorite show flashing “To be continued”, Lent feels inconvenient. Yet it is wonderfully inconvenient. While we could remain in our routine cadence of life, Lent invites us to reflect, take on, and give up; that we might sharpen our focus and reliance on God. Realigning our days, let alone our lives, will always initially feel inconvenient. However, maturity in faith and character development rarely take place as we speed through life. Like a new exercise routine, the initial interruption is soon recalibrated considering the realized benefits.

The wonderfully inconvenient season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, February 18. Ready, set, prepare.

Yours in Christ,  
Jim Rizer



*Bee Mine*  
*Fall in Love with Local Treasures!*

**FIRST SATURDAYS**  
**8AM - 2PM**  
Feb 7 | Mar 7 | Apr 4

## Clerk's Corner | Maryann O'Connor



As we enter the month of February, we are reminded that love is not merely a sentiment reserved on Valentine's Day, but a calling that defines the life of the church, Scripture tells us that "we love because He first loved us" (1John 4:19). That truth anchors everything we do together as a congregation—worship, service, fellowship, and care for one another.

Your session continues to meet regularly to pray, discern, and guide the spiritual and practical life of our church. These gatherings are not simply business meetings; they are times of seeking God's wisdom for how we can best serve Christ and one another. I am grateful for the faithful Elders who give their time and energy, and hearts to this work, and for a congregation that supports them with prayer and encouragement.

In the weeks ahead, we enter the season of Lent, a sacred time of reflection, repentance, and renewal. It is an opportunity to slow down God is inviting us to grow - perhaps in prayer, Scripture reading, generosity, or acts of kindness. May this season prepare our hearts for the joy of Easter.

Grace and Peace  
Maryann O'Connor  
Clerk of Session

***Thank you to all who participated in volunteering at the Community House this past December. Whether helping to organize grocery shopping, preparing food, driving, setting up tables, serving our friends, washing dishes and the many other things we may have missed!***

***We served 116 with 20-25 people coming back for seconds!***

***This takes many to accomplish such a wonderful and spiritual Mission.***

***We sincerely Thank You! Blessings, FHPC Mission Team***

**SAVE THE DATE**

Friday, March 20 • 11am

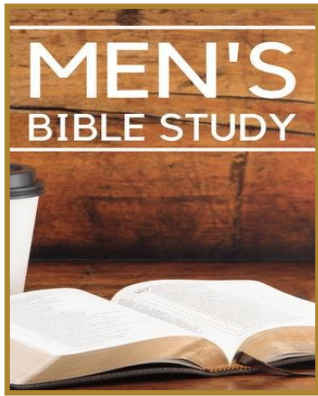


**Our Women's Fellowship**  
**is hosting a *Baby Shower***  
*to benefit mothers & babies at*  
*Maggie's Place*



*Watch for more details in March!*

## Men's Bible Study



**Men's Bible Study Group!** Join us for our Men's Bible Study Group, **February 2 & 16 at 9:00 AM in the Fireside Room.** Together, we'll explore the New Testament and seek to apply its teachings to our daily

lives.

If you have any questions, please contact Don Carillo at 480-694-3025 or [carillofamily8@gmail.com](mailto:carillofamily8@gmail.com).

## Men's Fellowship



**Gentlemen:** Save the date for Presby Pickins' on **Saturday, Feb. 7,** starting at **5:30 am.**

Also, our next breakfast meeting will be the following **Saturday, Feb. 21,** in the Fellowship Center beginning at **8:00 am.** With breakfast at **8:30 am.**

Blessings to all,

Bill Matty 815-282-6024 [bbmatty67@gmail.com](mailto:bbmatty67@gmail.com)

## Ladies' Drop-In



**Every Tuesday | 10 AM  
Fireside Room**

All ladies are invited to *drop-in* for fellowship, games, puzzles, and conversation.

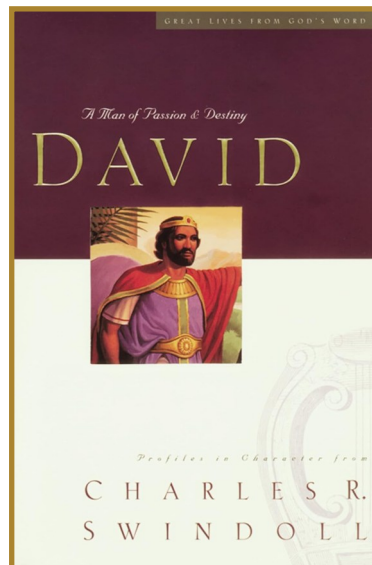
## Lunch & Lecture



**Saturday, February 14 & 28  
12 PM | Fireside Room  
Series on Genesis**

by Professor Gary Rendsburg, PHD For any questions, you may contact Maria Berry 602-799-9982.

## Women's Morning Bible Study



**Thursday,  
February 12,  
9:30 AM  
Fireside Room**

How perfectly God weaves His will together without our help! Saul sends for David and David attends him by playing his lyre. His music brings Saul relief from depression and its torment but he does not reveal he has been anointed by Samuel.

Please read Chapters 3 and 4 in our book David, a Man of Passion and Destiny by Charles Swindoll.

For more information call Monique Reynolds at 336-382-8733.

## Out n' About

Out and About on **February 18th at 12PM Noon** will be at **Blossom Kitchen.** Their address is **14835 E Shea Blvd.**

For reservations, please call: Joyce Leo at 803-522-2889 or Bonnie Matty at 815-260-5031



## Support Our Troops | Donna Sims



How time flies. Does not seem that long since I mailed out the Christmas cards filled with your handwritten notes, and now I will be letting you know that very soon, like in a couple of weeks, I will be passing out the envelopes ready for all who are willing to write handwritten notes for the

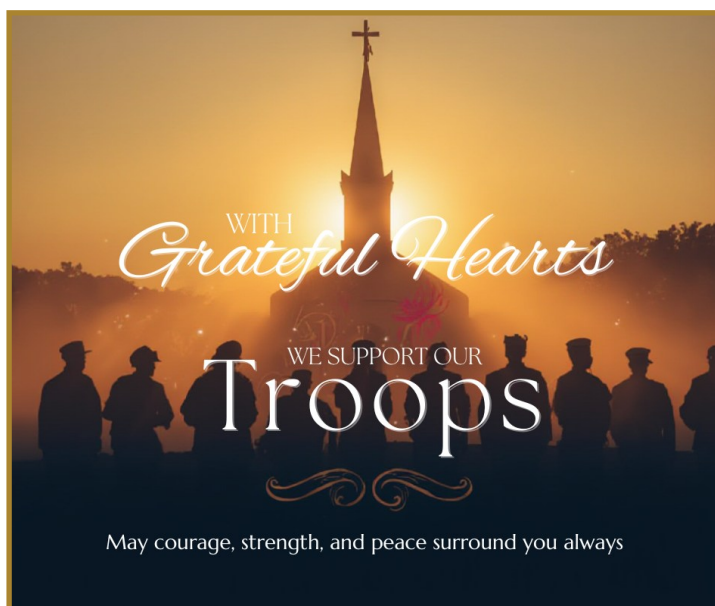
Easter cards. That's right, soon it will be time to write our notes for our Church-connected military in their Easter cards. Because Easter is early again this year, occurring the first Sunday in April, my timeline has really been made earlier than usual. I will begin passing out the envelopes on Sunday, February 15 with a period of one month, making March 15 the deadline to have your notes turned in back to me. Then, that leaves me only a few days to put all of everything together for the mailing by Friday, March 20. That's right, you have one whole month to do your notes. Anyway, as I have indicated, time sure does go fast.

I am currently in the middle of time for hopefully, being able to schedule another pick-up from CBI of our donations (Community Bridges Inc.). These donations are very important in helping our Veterans all around the area with clothing, toiletries, shoes, bedding, jackets and hats, and much more. Many Veterans find themselves in situations of homelessness, and CBI continues to help many, not just individuals but families, find housing. Just remember that the jacket or blanket that you donated will be keeping a Veteran warm.

Thanks again to all who have helped and are continuing to help with the needed donations. Please remember that our Veterans and Troops Ministry is year-round, it never stops. We are

always happy to see Church members and friends from our community placing items in our collection box, located in the Narthex on the East side, in the basket cart out front as you enter the Church and in the Church office. I thank you, the Mission Committee thanks you and our Veterans and Troops thank you for helping make our military ministry a continuing success and putting smiles on many faces.

Donna Sims,  
Mission Committee



## Library Footnotes | Althea Halchuck



### The Measure, Nikki Erlick

**What if there were a way to determine when you will die? Would you take it?** This is the premise of Nikki Erlick's 2022 debut novel, *The Measure*, an instant NY Times bestseller. One morning, everyone in the world aged 22 or older opens their doors and

finds a small box inscribed with **"the measure of your life lies within."** From that day on, everyone in the world finds a similar box at their door on the morning of their 21st birthday. Inside each box lies a string that can foretell the exact length of the recipient's life. Now everyone can know when he or she will die. The novel interweaves the lives of eight New Yorkers as they grapple with whether to open their box, the lengths of their own or a loved one's string, and the broader social implications of this new knowledge.

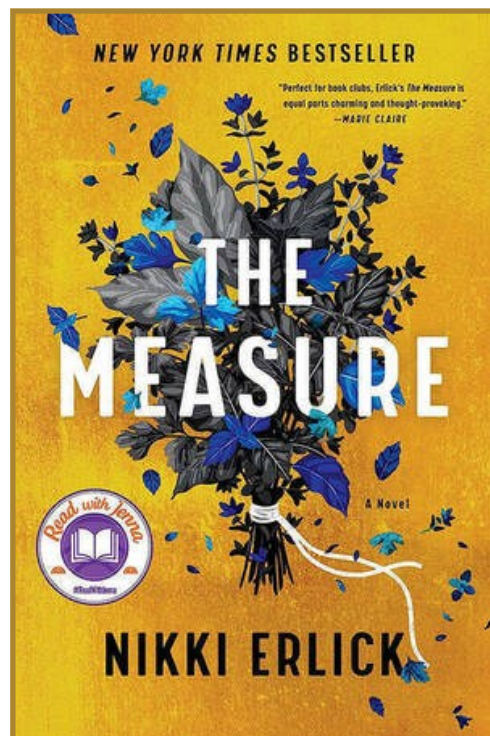
**How do you measure your life?** By creating a world in which everyone knows how long their life will be, Erlick explores the philosophical questions raised by such knowledge, as well as the social, cultural, and political implications. People are judged by the length of their strings. "Long-Stringers" are lucky enough to fantasize about their prolonged lives, and those who remain faithful to their short-string loves are considered heroes. Still, many take unnecessary risks, knowing when their deaths will come, ignoring the fact that although they won't die, they may be seriously injured. "Short Stringers," who will die in the near future, face immediate prejudice. In some cases, their partners leave them because they fear future heartbreak and grief. The military removes short stringers from combat roles and promotions. Banks refuse them loans. Colleges refuse them scholarships. An American presidential candidate runs a campaign based on fearmongering against short stringers. Government mandates in some countries require people to declare their string length. It becomes a long-string vs. short-string world. It is not

hard to imagine all of these things happening after our COVID experiences, during which time this book was written.

You can read *The Measure* as a brilliant political or dystopian fable, especially regarding the power fear holds in American culture today. Or you could read it as an explanation of the construction and mechanisms of prejudice. Many people, long and short stringers alike, fight back against the injustices and discrimination caused by the strings. There are global protests with people arguing that everyone is human and that short stringers deserve the right to contribute to the world for whatever time they have left.

One of the dominant messages here isn't about the length of your string; it's what you do with the knowledge that counts. **We all should live as though we've been given a short string.** A good life isn't measured by longevity; it's measured by how you choose to spend the time you've been given. Not knowing how much time you or the people you love have on this earth is a fundamental aspect of being human. **Would I open my own box?** If we could know when - but not how - we will die, would we want to? I asked myself this question throughout the book. Please read the book to see what happens to the eight characters, put yourself in their shoes, and consider how their choices might influence your thinking. **What would you do?**

Althea Halchuck  
January 4, 2026





## Music Ministry | Debbie Fisher



The new year is already flying by, with winter residents once again filling the pews and joining in the continued movement of life within our church.

Women's Sunday has just passed, featuring music that has inspired our nation throughout its history.

This year marks **250 years since the founding of a united effort to be a nation**—one offering free-thinking, hard-working people the opportunity to advance their lives as God has instilled in us, if we so choose. It is a place where we can agree or disagree, pursue personal happiness, and help others pursue theirs, as long as it does not cause harm to those who share this nation with us.

We are free to choose which religion to follow, which denomination to pursue, and whether we walk toward good or evil, right or wrong—while expecting consequences from our choices. We learn discernment through both wise decisions and poor ones. We may choose to care or not care and function in society accordingly. We can sing, dance, draw, golf, eat, drink, laugh, cry, encourage, and walk among others with our best-informed opinions, ready to offer them when they might be heard.

We may sometimes irritate or complicate matters, freely expecting others to tolerate us. In turn, we learn tolerance—accepting others and their ways of thinking, understanding where their thoughts come from, and appreciating their reasoning without losing ourselves or the value of our own experiences.

We have been at this for a long time, pursuing our God-given right to seek Him—and Him only—through His Son, our Savior, who is always available to us. We are His people. With the

freedom we enjoy in this nation, we are able to learn how to remain available to God, while recognizing that others who may not yet be children of God are still free to pursue their own path, whether God is their destination or not.

Fifty years ago, I was the youngest person selected to sing in a choir representing Idaho as we traveled to our nation's capital for the **200th anniversary**. We journeyed through beautiful states, singing of freedom, liberty, pursuits, and tolerance. We sang on the steps of the Capitol, at the Kennedy Center, stood at the Liberty Bell, and walked through cities where millions live together.

It's amazing how quickly fifty years pass. Our church had just been established then—and now our carpet has just been replaced! Hopefully, the new carpet will hold up under the pressure of many feet entering this sanctuary, as we continue learning about our glorious Savior for the next fifty years.

### Happy Birthday, America.

Debbie Fisher  
 Director of Music Ministries  
 Fountain Hills Presbyterian Church ECO



## Fountain Hills Presbyterian Church Foundation



### Are You Looking for a Way to Do Good?

The FHPC Foundation solicits, invests and subsequently disburses planned gifts from members and friends to ensure the future needs of the church and its ministries.

FHPC Foundation NEEDS your pledges, bequests, cash or check donations, endorsed stocks and bonds, IRA transfers, Qualified Minimum Distributions, real estate proceeds, trust fund designation, and why not tithe your insurance policy or estate???

Whatever you can give will be gratefully accepted. We can help you with the pledge

form – call today!

### Foundation Trustees

**Matt Jefferson, Chairman**  
**Linda Lull, Treasurer**

**Mary Holtan**  
**Bill Matty**

**Roy Nickel**  
**Susan Titus**

The FHPC Foundation is registered as a 501[c][3] non-profit organization. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. The Foundation's tax ID number is 46-2970452

## Columbarium



The Columbarium provides a final resting place for the mortal remains of members and friends. Along with the urn niches, there is a Wall of Remembrance, a waterfall and memorial benches, providing a lovely place for prayer and meditation. It is managed by the Columbarium Trustees, a committee of our church corporation. A trust fund insures proper maintenance and perpetual care of the area.

**U.S. Military Medallions** are available for Veterans' columbarium niches. Please contact the church office for more information.



## February Birthdays



1-Feb Ward MacKenzie  
 3-Feb Rebecca Redeman  
 6-Feb Roy Nickel  
 7-Feb Ruby Moreno  
 9-Feb Jane Realdsen  
 9-Feb Keith Spicer  
 12-Feb Melinda Stanton  
 12-Feb Eric Williamson

17-Feb John Bacher  
 18-Feb Tim Halchuck  
 23-Feb Shawn Uphoff  
 25-Feb Jackie Miles  
 26-Feb Barbara Oakeson  
 26-Feb Tyson Robinson  
 29-Feb John Youngquist



## Mission Messages | Mary Holtan

### “Showing God’s Love by Giving and Doing” November & December

#### Community House

On Monday, December 29, a team under the leadership of Debbie Olson prepared and served **116 meals** to our friends at Community House in Scottsdale. Thank you to all the wonderful FHPC volunteers who helped make this outreach possible.

Upcoming meal service dates:

- **March 30** – Christine Colley
- **June 29** – Debbie Olson
- **August 31** – Kim Caputo
- **November 30** – *Volunteer leader needed*

A sign-up sheet for volunteers—and for someone to lead the November 30 service—will be available at the Connect Desk. Please consider supporting our neighbors in need of a warm meal.

#### Free Tax Preparation—Jane Allen

Jane Allen shared information about the **free tax preparation services** available at the Community Center. She explained the process and eligibility

requirements. This is a wonderful service offered here in Fountain Hills—please spread the word to friends and neighbors who may benefit.



#### Souper Bowl

Kim Caputo is once again leading our annual **Souper Bowl** project. The drive kicked off on January 18 with a “pre-game” collection and will conclude on **February 8**, Super Bowl Sunday, with the final collection of soup cans. Kim will also be collecting donations at **Presby Pickins on February 7**.

Let’s make this our biggest Souper Bowl yet! Please donate cans of soup to support **Extended Hands** in honor of your favorite team. Thank you for your generosity!

## Social Media | Live Streaming

#### Facebook Page:

[www.facebook.com/fhpresbyterianchurch/](http://www.facebook.com/fhpresbyterianchurch/)



View Sunday **worship** and read current posts about FHPC. Be sure to “Like” our page to get posts directly in your News-feed.



#### YouTube Channel:

[www.youtube.com/@fhpresbyterianchurch](http://www.youtube.com/@fhpresbyterianchurch)



View Sunday worship here under “Live.” Subscribe to our Channel to receive notifications of upcoming LIVE services.



© 2025 **In Touch** is a monthly publication of Fountain Hills Presbyterian Church. Articles should be submitted to [news@fhpresby.org](mailto:news@fhpresby.org) no later than the **15th** of the month prior to publication. Editors: Eric Williamson & Monique Reynolds



**Office Hours: Monday – Thursday: 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**  
**Friday – Sunday: Closed**  
**13001 Fountain Hills Blvd. | Fountain Hills, AZ 85268**  
**Phone: 480.837.1763 | Email: [office@fhpresby.org](mailto:office@fhpresby.org)**

