



Pastoral Update—February 5, 2021



*Blessed are those who walk in the light of your presence and rejoice in your name all day long; they **celebrate** your righteousness.* Psalm 89:15-16

Did you know that February is a month of celebration? In the most challenging times, we may also celebrate the good that remains.

February is *Black History Month*, a time to remember and learn from the past and to celebrate the possibilities for true racial justice. We celebrated *Groundhog Day*, and Punxsutawney Phil predicted six more weeks of winter! Today is *National Wear Red Day* to raise awareness of heart disease & stroke as the #1 killer of women in the U.S. so women will get annual checkups to assess hearth health risk. Next up is *Super Bowl LV* when the Kansas City Chiefs and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers face off with “the goat” and “the kid” to celebrate the next championship. That brings us to *Valentine’s Day*, the day of celebrating our love for each other, and *President’s Day*, a federal holiday to celebrate U.S. presidents.

As people of faith who walk in the light of the Lord, we also have our own celebrations. **Ash Wednesday kicks off Lent on February 17th**. We will record the worship service in the Tempe sanctuary with Imposition of Ashes, and we will celebrate Holy Communion. The service will be available on YouTube at noon. We have put together a special ***Ash Wednesday @ Home kit*** for pick up at either campus, which includes individual ash packets, communion kits, and special items for worship at home. Be sure to stop by Tempe or Gilbert to pick up your kit beginning Monday, February 8th! We are working hard to make virtual worship as meaningful as possible and to create a sense of community and connection. Also be sure to check out our new February Playlist “Mercy” here: [Children](#), [Youth](#), and [Adult](#).

We are moving forward and expanding our missional outreach with **Livestream Worship beginning on the First Sunday of Lent, February 21st at 9am**. Worship will include Pastor/Music Director/Production Manager only. Special music and scripture readers will continue to be pre-recorded and played to the livestream until COVID numbers are low enough to gather in person with safety precautions.

After the 21st, livestream worship will be celebrated every Sunday at 9am. Holy Communion will be celebrated the 1st Sunday of each month and individual communion kits will be available for pick up at both campuses. The services will be posted on YouTube. This is a new way of worshipping live from the sanctuary which we believe benefits the congregation for the greater good of all.

In the midst of all the struggles we share, we can celebrate. As we continue to love our neighbor by not gathering in person, Desert Cross is moving forward and continuing to find new ways to improve our presence and connection. We hope you will engage with us in a new way and be open to the changes that we are called to make in these extraordinary times. This temporary situation is difficult, yet we have faith that the Lord walks with us. We trust that we *will* gather together again. Oh, what an extraordinary celebration of joy and thanksgiving we *will* share together on that day!

Peace until we meet again,

Pastor Andrea