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AZMN

# PUBLICATION

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# Thanks In All Circumstances

**“Give thanks in all circumstances.” 1 Thessalonians 5:18a (NIV)**

Have you ever lost your heart of Thanksgiving? Embraced the grim and weary rather than the joy and strength promised as a result of giving thanks?

I read a quote not long ago. Forgive me for not remembering who to give credit to, but this is what it said, “Thanksgiving may not change our situation, but it will always change our soul!”

The Apostle Paul wrote in his final instructions to the Thessalonians to simply give thanks when all things are going well! NO, that is not what he wrote. That would too easy to accomplish. Instead, he adds the bull’s eye to his instructions with the phrase, ‘in all circumstances, give thanks!’

We know that Jesus’ joy is ours for the taking, but often we cannot figure out how to internalize God’s joy amidst the drudgery of the daily grind we find ourselves in. We have the mistaken thought that when our circumstances change, joy will be within our grasp.

Here is the danger of not giving thanks in all circumstances. Life becomes drudgery rather than opportunity. We become blind to recognizing the faithfulness of God, even in the glory of answered prayers.

I’ve used this personal illustration before, but it bears repeating today. Marjorie and I were headed down the road to visit her family in Colorado. Our hearts were loaded down with the cares of this life. Burdens, that at times felt crushing to the soul. We began giving God thanks as we recalled His faithfulness, and the victories we experienced over the years. As we talked, we wept and laughed, as one testimony of the Lord’s faithfulness followed another. One memory seemed to spark another.



Gradually, our heart's burdens began to lift, and we traded our sorrows for the joy of giving thanks in all circumstances. It changed our outlook for the future, brought scriptures to mind, and boosted our faith to believe for what looked impossible. As we gave thanks and meditated on the Lord's goodness, our burdens lifted and hope replaced despair. Heaviness was exchanged for freedom. Paul knew the power of giving thanks. It positions us to receive of the bounty from Heaven at God's gracious hand.

I do not have knowledge of what your 'all circumstances' looks like today; however, I can tell you with assurance in my heart that Paul knew the secret of giving thanks in ALL circumstances. His encouragement to give thanks, regardless of circumstances, is foundational to an overcoming life.

In this beautiful season of Thanksgiving, let me encourage you to give thanks in all of your circumstances. The Lord will not fail you. He has heard your prayers, He is doing something about it, and He cares about what concerns you.

Happy Thanksgiving from Marjorie and I, as well as our entire family to you and yours!

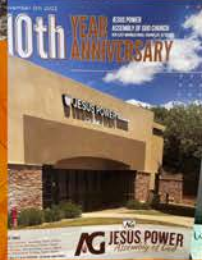
Sincerely,

Pastor Harris and Marjorie Harris




**"I was privileged to attend and celebrate with Jesus Power Assembly of God Church in Chandler to honor of their 10 Year Anniversary as a body of believers. In 2013, Pastor Bismark Akomeah came to plant in Arizona and the church began meeting as a small cell fellowship. Their first place of worship was located on Arizona Avenue in Chandler, after much ministry and labor, they moved to a new location on Alma School Road and God continued to bless the work of their hands and bring increase.**

**On June 24, 2018, the current church residence at 835 East Warner Road, Chandler was dedicated to the Lord under Pastor Edmund Eghan's leadership as well as Bismark Owusu. This was a day of rejoicing as the church under the leadership of Apostle Akomeah and Reverend Edmund Eghan came to give glory to God for these 10 years of ministry. God bless this congregation and Pastor Edmund Eghan."**





# Giving Thanks for our Missionaries



Ron Rockwell, Assistant Superintendent

**“In that day you will say: ‘Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted.’” Isaiah 12:4**

As our family prepares to give thanks together, I’m reminded of just how grateful I am for those who labor among the unreached with sacrifice and faithfulness. Suffice it to say, I’m proud of our Arizona Ministry Network global workers and the many ways they reflect the heart of God. They’ve said, “yes” to God’s call to make disciples of all nations. They take great risks and make great sacrifices daily. They pursue Christ’s example and push forth His truths in all they do.

Our “sent ones” are building teams to bring Christ’s peace into spiritually dark regions defined by immense spiritual darkness, evil and chaos. They courageously follow the Spirit’s leading and boldly move into some of the most hostile environments for Christians in the world. They are truly sold out for the sake of the gospel, and I know we are all thankful, not only for their passion to make known the goodness of God among all people, but for obeying our Savior’s final words: *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” Matthew 28:19-20*

Because they have obeyed His call, they and their families will be experiencing the cost of obedience this Thanksgiving. It’s a cost that many of us haven’t been called to pay and one that we may have a difficult time relating to.



When I personally think about their willingness to obey and to joyfully accept the various ways the cost of that obedience must be paid; I take that opportunity to lift them in prayer and give thanks.

And so, to our AZ Network global workers celebrating Thanksgiving far from loved ones and in cultures vastly different from your own, we say, "THANK YOU!"

To all pastors and ministry leaders who pray, generously support, and faithfully send, thank you as well! We could not do this Great Commission work without each another.

## Prayer for the Middle East

In closing, let me encourage all of us to continue fasting and praying for salvation to come to the Middle East. The obvious need in Israel, Gaza, the West Bank and across the whole Middle East is the Gospel of Jesus Christ - the Good News. Praise God there are Jewish Christians, Palestinian Christians and spirit-filled believers in Lebanon, Syria, Iran, and other countries in the region. But they are a minority, and they need our prayers.

Imagine what would happen if there were revivals springing up in the Middle East? Imagine what the results would be as churches, made up of Jews and Arabs singing praise to Jesus together, spring forth? God's arm is not too short and we should pray for His mercy to be extended at this time in unparalleled ways.

Remember, the ultimate hope we have is in Jesus. One thing war and bloodshed do for us as followers of Jesus is leave us longing for a new world - one where there be genuine, eternal peace between us and God and between nations. Praise God, that day is coming. Come, Lord Jesus.

Love and prayers,  
Ron Rockwell



# Celebrating

## Ministries & Churches

### PASTOR DAVID & VONDA COTA

In 2014, Pastor David was appointed as our Arizona Native Ministries Building & Ministries Facilitator and since then has taken many teams to various churches & outreaches in the state of Arizona to build up & benefit Native Churches.

For 9 years, we have been honored to have Pastor David & Vonda in this role as they have impacted people all over the state and the world!

As of November 5th, Pastor David & Vonda are now officially stepping into a new season as Lead Pastors for Carrizo Assembly of God.

Thank you Pastor David & Vonda!  
We appreciate you & your ministry!





# CITY CHURCH - SURPRISE



City Church meets in Surprise, AZ at Ottawa University in their Faith Arena. The church was planted in June of 2016 with 27 people. Pastor Russ Smith & his wife, Traci have over 30 years of credentialed ministry experience including: Youth Pastor of 250 and Executive Pastor of 3500. They could not seem to grow City Church past 125-150. They came out of COVID with only 33 people. Pastor Russ & Traci prayed, fasted, and never gave up. At the beginning of 2023, they had 69 people, including children.

In July, Pastor Russ & Traci attended the AZ CMN Retreat with Mike Santiago from Break200 Ministry. They jumped in 100% with following the steps provided through the Break200 strategy. City Church now has an average attendance of over 200! They have had 27 first-time decisions for Christ, 21 water baptisms, and 8 baptized in the Holy Spirit!

City Church expects that now, they have broken 200 permanently by taking the very scalable systems of Break200 and watching them work!

Interested in learning more about these same strategies? Check out our website: <https://www.azag.org/az-cmn-retreat>.

**LEIGH METCALF**





*Note to Self...*

## Remember Your Messages

**Remember your word to your servant, for you have given me hope.  
Psalm 119:49**

What a great time of worship and fellowship we had at last week's Ministers Renewal! Pastor Raul Salgado opened his new building and worship team to us and our guest speaker, Greg Ford, brought timely words in all three sessions. His final session though, ministered the most to me and was something I have never heard spoken about as he did.

A reoccurring theme in recent conversations with pastors has been the hurts that ministry brings. Not subtle and occasional, but more the overt and oft-repeated hurts that ministry provides. It reminds me of a conversation I had playing golf with a layman a few weeks ago. He has a son in ministry and along a similar vein he said to me, "You would think the safest, most enjoyable type of work in all the world would be pastoring Christians!" There was a sad humor to his tone.

Greg Ford's final session was a challenge to pastors to go back and "listen to your own messages!" He gave several examples of how months or even years later, God has used his own sermons to speak to and encourage his heart. It was a revolutionary thought! I have reflected much on this over the past few days.



Pastors, I would encourage you to not only try this, but possibly make it a spiritual discipline. Like myself, you have probably used your past sermons in counseling settings or other conversations, but have you ever let the Holy Spirit speak to you directly from one of your own sermons? It's really a quite logical way for God to encourage, challenge, and heal us over our seasons of ministry.

I'd encourage you to listen/watch the Tuesday afternoon session of the Renewal when it is posted on our website/phone app. It will bless you.



**Stay healthy in ministry,  
Pastor Jeff**

#### **Times/Reasons to listen to one of your own sermons:**

- Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you of past messages when you are discouraged/in need.
- Remember how much effort and how fresh a sermon was when you first gave it.
- Reflect on the intent that message carried for your flock you love and care for.
- Discuss this with your spouse and recount favorite or timely messages you have given.
- If you would like to discuss these thoughts, feel free to give me a call: 480-579-9998.





# EQUIP TRAINING COHORT



Pastors and Men's Leaders, we are excited to announce that Pastor Gordon Houston from the National Men's Department will be investing in the churches and men of Arizona early in 2024.

Pastor Gordon was the keynote speaker at the 2023 Man Camp and gave the entire group the first part of the Equip training series. If you or your men missed it, you can watch it on the Network Men's YouTube Channel [HERE](#).

Pastors please consider joining us for the next two sessions.

The sessions will be held at The Rock Church Scottsdale, located at 2012 N. Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale, AZ on January 6, 2024 and March 2, 2024.

All sessions will run from 9:00AM – 4:00PM with two 20-minute breaks and a 45-minute lunch. Lunch will be catered and is included at a cost of \$25 per person per session.

Pastor Gordon will be leading all the sessions here in Arizona and will be helping each church to realize their own vision for reaching Men in their church and community.

If you are interested in joining us, we need you to bring your Men's lead team (bring 3 with a maximum of 8 including you) that are able to commit to both sessions. If you don't have a Men's lead team, let's talk about how to choose some men in your church to step up and help with this vital ministry.

Please contact our 360Man Missionary, Daniel Hann for more information or to sign up. He can be reached at 928-210-2270 or [pastordan32@gmail.com](mailto:pastordan32@gmail.com).

Thank you for your commitment to the Lord and Men of Arizona!



**Dale Gray, Men's Director**  
[dgray@rockag.com](mailto:dgray@rockag.com)





# BTG

Bridging the Gap  
AZAG WOMEN



**Will you consider financially supporting AZAG women for only \$10 per month and help us bridge the gap?**

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE

### THE RESULT OF YOUR GENEROSITY

- Financial support and scholarships for events
- Financial support and ministry for single mom
- Leadership trainings
- Online resources, podcasts, and devotionals to encourage and inspire
- Adventure trips - to encounter God in new and exciting ways
- Creative workshops - to creatively connect with God
- Dinner Parties & coffee pop-ups to build community around the table
- Opportunities to serve together
- Ministry to address mental health crisis
- Investing in and encouraging leaders individually and corporately
- The opportunity to impact thousands of women in Arizona for Jesus!

## PARTNER BENEFITS

### BRIDGING THE GAP PARTNER

- A thank you gift
- Special discounts at the boutique throughout the year
- Special events designed just for those who are part of Bridging the Gap
- Special perks at events (early entry, early bird registration, etc.)
- Eternal rewards for making an impact

**“IT MAY SEEM LIKE AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK BUT WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE”**

Click [HERE](#) to start giving today!



Lindsay Petri, Women's Director



# ARIZONA YOUTH MINISTRIES



Hey Arizona Youth Pastors,

THANK YOU for trusting us with your students and their spiritual formation at Arizona Youth Convention 2023. I know not everyone who wanted to make it could this year. We believe we stewarded the weekend the best we could and are grateful to Radiant Church for hosting us and allowing us to pack out their auditorium, bringing in hundreds of more chairs to accommodate the overflow.

Over 300 students made decisions for Christ, flooding the altars in the first few moments of the weekend! Collectively, we raised over \$56,000 for Speed the Light to spread the gospel in East Africa. This generation is more desperate for Jesus than we imagined.

God is doing something special in Arizona, and I do believe this generation is being REFORMED into the likeness of Christ Jesus. There is such a hunger for God's presence, and we are praying for you in your local contexts as you continue to make disciples. What a privilege we have to serve and lead this generation. Let's keep stoking this desert on fire!



[azagyouth.org](http://azagyouth.org)



**GRIFFIN MCGRATH**  
gmcgrath@azag.org





*Thank You  
Kids Ministry  
Leaders!*


As the year comes to a close, we want to take the time to thank all of our kids ministry leaders across our Arizona churches!

We know you work hard to create an amazing experience for every child that comes through your ministry, and we want to remind you that what you do matters! There is so much you do behind the scenes like writing and prepping lessons, setting up classrooms, scheduling volunteers, getting check-in systems to work, and so much more!

From the big moments to the small moments, thank you for being faithful and consistent. You are impacting lives for the Kingdom of God. You are showing little hearts how to love Jesus. You are ministering to families. You are laying the foundation of God's Word in their lives.

Thank you for all you do and we will continue to pray for you and your ministries.





# December ASOM Classes

CERTIFIED:  
LICENSED:  
ORDAINED:

MINISTERIAL  
INTRO TO  
PASTORAL

ETHICS  
HOMILETICS  
MINISTRY

REGISTER

TODAY

AT

AZASOM.COM



A Z N W M



from the office of the

## NETWORK OF WOMEN MINISTERS

Denise Ryan director

AZNWM

NETWORK OF WOMEN MINISTERS



**THE MEN & ME**  
Being the Only Woman in  
the Room  
by JoAnn Butrin PhD

Dr. Butrin will join us for our first session with her inspiring story!

# BOOK STUDY COHORT

ARIZONA NWM EDUCATION

I am thrilled to announce AZ NWM Education! As I have spoken to many of you, it has become a growing need to better equip and prepare us for our ministry callings. I believe a first step is working to partner in ministry - this includes better understanding how to minister and communicate with men. Dr. JoAnn Butrin started her missionary career in the Congo in a male dominated culture. Eventually, she served as the first woman on the AG World Missions executive team. JoAnn's voice will share "how to" and "how not to" seat at the table. To register or get more info contact:

NETWORK OF WOMEN MINISTERS

A Z N W M



# Spring RETREAT

**Dr. Melissa Alfaro**

Guest Speaker

Newly Elected National Executive Presbyter

MARCH 15-16, 2024

2911 X WORSHIP



**Pastor J. Alfaro** and his wife, Melissa are Lead Pastors at TAB CHURCH HOUSTON. Together they will join in our NWM Panel.

**TWENTYNINE:ELEVEN CHURCH**  
Tempe, Arizona

We encourage you to book hotels now in the area due to high tourist season in Arizona.

God has abundantly blessed us with each encounter at our NWM Retreats! Last year with Alexa Pineda, He took us to a new level of spiritual awakening.

I am confident that God has planned something extraordinary again!

Please put the dates on your calendar. We will gather at 5:00pm on Friday and end at 2:30pm the next day. More information will be coming soon.

If you need a hotel, plan on booking now. If you need to stay with someone in the area, please contact: [lavonreep@gmail.com](mailto:lavonreep@gmail.com)





# Blessed

TEEN CHALLENGE OF ARIZONA

# Join us!



## Blessed

TEEN CHALLENGE OF ARIZONA

### Fall Fundraising Banquet Tour 2023

#### TUCSON

Monday - November 6 6:30 pm

El Conquistador Resort  
10000 N. Oracle Rd, Oro Valley, AZ  
[tcaz.org/blessed](http://tcaz.org/blessed)



## Blessed

TEEN CHALLENGE OF ARIZONA

### Fall Fundraising Banquet Tour 2023

#### EAST VALLEY

Thursday - November 16 6:30 pm

DoubleTree Hilton-Phoenix Mesa  
1011 W Holmes Avenue, Mesa, Arizona  
[tcaz.org/blessed](http://tcaz.org/blessed)



## Blessed

TEEN CHALLENGE OF ARIZONA

### Fall Fundraising Banquet Tour 2023

#### PHOENIX

FRIDAY - November 17 6:30 pm

Radiant Church  
15522 W. Paradise Lane, Surprise, Arizona  
[tcaz.org/blessed](http://tcaz.org/blessed)



## Blessed

TEEN CHALLENGE OF ARIZONA

### Fall Fundraising Banquet Tour 2023

#### SCOTTSDALE

SATURDAY - November 18 6:30 pm

Scottsdale Plaza Resort  
7200 N Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale, Arizona  
[tcaz.org/blessed](http://tcaz.org/blessed)



# Network Information

## ARIZONA MINISTRY NETWORK

2601 E Thomas Rd., Ste. 210  
Phoenix, Arizona 85016-8228

Phone: 602.343.4000

Fax: 602.252.5527

Website: [www.azag.org](http://www.azag.org)

Email: [districtoffice.azag.org](mailto:districtoffice.azag.org)

Monday - Thursday 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

## EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Stephen L. Harris                      Superintendent

Ron Rockwell                      Assistant Superintendent

Leigh Metcalf                      Secretary-Treasurer

## EXECUTIVE PRESBYTERS

Jesus Garza                      Intercultural

Dale Gray                      Central Area

Todd League                      North Area

Kirk Sorensen                      South Area

## GENERAL PRESBYTERS

Stephen L. Harris

Leigh Metcalf

Ron Rockwell

## RESOURCE BOARD MEMBERS

Jackie Holgate                      Native American Rep.

Griffin McGrath                      Youth Director & Under 40 Rep.

Jeff Peterson                      Pastoral Care Director

Lindsay Petri                      Women's Director

Kirstyn Rempel                      Children's Director

Christina Vincent                      Women's Rep.

## DISTRICT PRESBYTERS

Richard Bush                      Canyon North Section

Bob Sainz                      Central Valley Section

Marty Paxson                      East Section

Allen Tyson                      East Central Section

Brad Davis                      East Valley Section

Jeremy Peters                      North Central Section

Kathryn Pierce                      Northeast Section

Bruce Rahlf                      Northwest Section

Caden Metcalf                      Northwest Valley Section

Ralph Morris                      Phoenix Metro Indian Section

Ken Cosentino                      South Section

Eric Young                      South Metro Section

Josh Lane                      Southeast Section

Paul Lavino                      Southeast Valley Section

Paula Milner                      Southwest Section

Keith Howard                      West Valley Section

## DIRECTORS & LEADERS

Griffin McGrath                      Youth Ministries

Kirstyn Rempel                      Kids Ministries

Dale Gray                      Men's Ministries

Lindsay Petri                      Women's Ministries

Jeff Peterson                      Pastoral Care

Yoyo Garcia                      Youth Alive

Yisrael Vincent                      Arizona School of Ministry

Rick Ryan                      Intercultural Ministries

Jim Lopez                      Native American Ministries

Denise Ryan                      Network of Women Ministers

Jason Dyer                      Granite Hills Camp

Bill Weaver                      Royal Rangers

Snow Peabody                      AZ Teen Challenge

Stephen & Jill Valentine                      Deaf Ministries





Thank you for  
being a part of the  
Arizona Ministry  
Network!

## Recent Network Statistics

### OPEN CHURCHES

Cedar Creek, Assembly of God

(Interim: Ron Burnett)

Denneshotso, Trinity Assembly of God

(Interim: Isaac Todachine)

Camp Verde, Desert Willow Church

Golden Valley-Abundant Grace Fellowship

Holbrook, Faith Assembly

Houck Bethel Navajo, Assembly of God

Lake Havasu, Abundant Grace

Page, First Assembly of God

Polacca, Assembly of God

Rainbow Mtn., Navajo Mtn.

San Manuel, Assembly of God

San Carlos, Apache Assembly of God

Sedona, Canyon Trails Cowboy Church

Welton, Assembly of God

(Interim: Ron Kobs)

### DECEASED

Minister Edward Wooten 9/17/23