

# COMMUNITY CHURCH *of the Verdes*



## Church Profile



The Community Church of the Verdes is an inter-denominational Christian congregation committed to the spiritual nourishment and growth of all members, friends and visitors through regular worship, thoughtful education and faithful community in order that we may attempt to be obedient disciples of Jesus Christ as we serve others here and in the world.

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### **Description of Community**

We are located east of Scottsdale and north of Fountain Hills, Arizona. The Verdes are unique. They are surrounded on all four sides by open space, the McDowell Regional Park on the west, Fort McDowell Indian Community on the south, and the Tonto National Forest to the east and north.



In 1971, the original land plan was completed for this community on 869 acres. By 1974 the first clubhouse was completed. The pioneers who invested and put their hearts and souls into this area were ultimately quite successful after a number of difficult years. Rio Verde was developed as a location where residents could be surrounded by their friends, and while remote, the beauty of the area and the warmth of the residents made Rio Verde a unique and attractive place to live. Today, Rio Verde consists of 1009 home sites with only a very few open lots remaining. Some of the original residents remain in Rio Verde today. Two beautiful 18-hole park-style golf courses, a 28,000 sq. ft. clubhouse and a separate 14,000 sq. ft. Community Center are enjoyed by Rio Verde residents. The Community Church of the Verdes is located in the center of the community. This inter-denominational Christian church conducts services in a very striking campus-type facility, with a newly constructed Sanctuary, Chapel and courtyard. Members of the St. Dominic's Mission also hold weekly Catholic services in this facility.



As Rio Verde grew and approached its build out, the development company acquired property to the north. The combination of several parcels totaling about 695 acres allowed the planning of a new community to be known as Tonto Verde. The first Tonto Verde residents moved into their new homes in November 1994.

Tonto Verde development has progressed quickly. Approximately 647 homes have been completed, and upon build out there will be approximately 715 residential units. Tonto Verde also enjoys two championship 18-hole links-style desert golf courses and a 26,000 sq. ft. updated clubhouse that features a physical fitness center, swimming pool, meeting rooms, along with a beautiful dining room and grill.



This third community, approximately the same size as Rio and Tonto Verde, is located north of Rio Verde Drive and bordered by the Tonto National Forest. At its completion, the 840 acres of Trilogy will include approximately 1250 home sites. The golf course and infrastructure are completed and homes are currently being constructed primarily along Rio Verde Drive.

As the Verde communities grow, Scottsdale grows closer to us. Substantial new construction is underway on Rio Verde Drive and Dynamite Road. Although we

were once “remote” to the rest of the world, the world is slowly but surely coming our way.

## **Demographics of the Area Surrounding The Community Church of the Verdes**

Population of the Verdes varies substantially from the winter season to the summer. Census data (American Community Survey of 2014) indicates there are 2324 permanent residents in the Verdes, zip code 85263.

Real estate records indicate the population of Rio Verde is approximately 1700 in 980 home sites. Tonto Verde has approximately 700 home sites with a population of 1432. The average age for both communities is about 72. While demographic data is not currently available for Trilogy, the average age of the residents is likely younger.

For more demographics and a map to our community visit our website at [www.theverdes.com](http://www.theverdes.com)

## **History of the Church**

The Community Church of the Verdes was formed in 1980. Early services were first conducted in the Country Club, and later in the original Community Center building, which was completed in 1983.

Our church site was purchased in 1987. Ground breaking began in 1988 and the original church was dedicated in January 1989. Prior to the church being constructed, an agreement was reached with our Catholic neighbors to share the church and expenses, although at the insistence of the archbishop ownership was left in the hands of the Protestants. In 1990, a Columbarium or Memorial Garden was added to the church property. Niches are sold on a basis that provides perpetual care and maintenance. Ecumenical services are held in the garden on All Saints Day in November and Memorial Day Sunday.

Church membership grew and a Church Expansion Committee was formed in 1997. Money was pledged and a new campus with a 600-seat Sanctuary was designed. Ground breaking began in June 1999, and the new Sanctuary, a 100 seat Chapel and a large courtyard were dedicated in April, 2000. The Sanctuary is designed for overflow crowds by sending chancel sound to the Chapel and to the courtyard. The structural design allows for ready construction of a 150-seat balcony. The Rio Verde

and Tonto Verde Community Associations as well as the Rio Verde Country Club use the Sanctuary for occasional meetings

The original church was converted to Founders Hall and is used for fellowship after service on Sunday as well as for a variety of church and community functions. Within Founders Hall there is a Pastor's Suite, and a large secretarial office and work area. There are two additional office areas available for meetings and another for Children's Sunday school. Upstairs is a more formal meeting room used for Board meetings, and an office used by St. Dominic's Mission.

The first pastors for our church were paid by the Sunday. In 1984, a Chaplain for Friendship Village in Tempe, Arizona agreed to conduct regular Sunday services with some limited pastoral duties. In 1991, Dr. Dwight Cumbee was hired on a part time basis, and in 1997 became the church's first full time minister. Dr. Kevin Brown was called as Pastor in 2005 and served until October 2010. Following our interim minister and several visiting pastors, Dr. Cathy Northrup became Pastor in August, 2011.

The current staff consists of a pastor, music director, administrative assistant, pastoral associate, office assistant/website administrator and a custodian.

## **Demographics of the Congregation**

Membership of the Church is approximately 460 people. This includes both members and associate members. Since our community is largely made up of part time residents (winter months), many members hold associate memberships in the Community Church of the Verdes as well as membership in their home church. Many others attend church here while visiting the community throughout the winter months.

## **Church Attendance**

The Community Church of the Verdes has one traditional service each Sunday. The average attendance from September to May is approximately 275 people. During the summer months, the average attendance is approximately 100 people.

## Financial Information about Community Church of the Verdes

	<u>Year 2014</u>	<u>Year 2015</u>
<b>Receipts</b>		
Contributions	\$423,734	\$447,630
Rent and Bldg Usage	109,260	109,260
Misc.	27,067	22,969
Total	\$560,061	\$579,859

<b>Disbursements</b>		
Ministerial	\$140,804	\$157,210
Music	76,908	82,020
Facility Operations	126,114	129,728
Office Administration	44,651	46,520
Worship, Fellowship, etc.	70,354	73,424
Total Disbursements	\$458,831	\$488,902
Receipts more than disbursements	\$101,230	\$90,957

In the early days, the people of the Church established a pattern of keeping the membership informed of its financial needs. Sufficient contributions have thus been forthcoming. Because of the success of this plan, no annual pledge drives have ever been conducted. By following this pattern through the past 35 years of the church's life, we continue to remain debt free.

Throughout the history of the church, Mission programs have been a priority. During the 1980's, the membership organized the first Outreach or Mission Program for Sunshine Acres Children's Home in Mesa, Arizona. Sunshine Acres annually receives substantial financial support plus personal assistance from church members. Over the years, the congregation has been the incubator for programs like Habitat for Humanity, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and the Christmas Family Project which assists 25 or more needy families from the larger Phoenix area.

Another very active endeavor is our Stephen Ministry program which provides pastoral support to our congregation and community. It is made up of 13 Protestant and 5 Catholic lay men and women.

### **Benevolence Organizations supported by the Church**

<b>Name of Organization</b>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>
Friends of the Orphans	\$2,500	\$2,500
Sunshine Acres	\$11,000	\$11,000
Save the Family	\$7,000	\$10,000
Reigning Grace Ranch	\$10,000	\$10,000
Homeless ID Project	\$6,000	\$5,000
Outward Bound	\$2,500	\$5,000
St. Vincent de Paul	\$6,000	\$2,500
Total	\$45,000	\$46,000

There are another 10 charities that receive smaller amounts of money from Missions or from Endowments.

The Catholic residents of the Verdes rent our Sanctuary for their services and meetings. Members of both church congregations work closely on the Christmas project. This arrangement brings about more effective use of the church property and also brings the members of both the Community Church of the Verdes and the St. Dominic Mission together in assisting others in the Valley of the Sun.

### **Church Mission Statement**

The Community Church of the Verdes is an inter-denominational Christian congregation committed to the spiritual nourishment and growth of all members, friends and visitors through regular worship, thoughtful education and faithful community in order that we may attempt to be obedient disciples of Jesus Christ as we serve others here and in the world.

### **Who We Are**

The doors of our church are open to all who would join us in worship, fellowship and service. We offer educational programs to encourage and strengthen Christian faith. We provide care and assistance to those in need through a variety of ministries.

As an inter-denominational church, we appreciate and celebrate diversity. We do not insist on one theological position, but are respectful of different traditions, theological backgrounds, and beliefs of members, friends and visitors.

As a Christian church we express our faith through the words of the Apostles' Creed, and by actively reaching out to others in our local communities, the greater Phoenix area and the wider world.

## **Organization and Governance**

The spiritual leader of the Community Church of the Verdes is an engaged Pastor, while management of the affairs of the Church is vested in the Board of Trustees utilizing a committee structure wherein each committee has authority to carry out its mission within its own accountability and the constraints of overall Church mission, policy and budget. The committee chairs report on their activity regularly to the Board. Interaction between committees for discussion and resolution of contested issues occur at the Board level.

The church recently established a committee that reviewed the mission, ministry and management functions of the church. The vision elements of the mission statement were adopted by the Board and congregation. In addition, a Trustees Manual provides more specific duties of the President, Board Members and Pastor, and is consistent with the by-laws of the Church.

## **Strengths of the Community Church of the Verdes**

The environment in which the Church was founded has been the key to the development of its strengths. The Verdes Communities lie in a picturesque area of the Sonoran Desert surrounded by a National Forest, a County park, and Indian lands. The vistas east and west reveal beautifully rugged mountains offering spectacular sunrise and sunset opportunities. The Church campus is situated in the center of the community of Rio Verde, a community of retired and semi-retired peoples who migrated here from nearly all states of the nation, but primarily the Midwest. The campus facility is a striking, relatively new assemblage of structures, designed for future expansions, and well suited to carry out the activities set forth in the Church Mission Statement. Unlike most residential areas today, the Verdes have a uniquely strong sense of community spirit, encouraging a volunteer mindset to prevail. Many of the residents play golf in their retirement, a fact that allows pleasing panoramas of lush green golf course grass from within the community.

The people are this Church's greatest asset. Made up mostly of those who have experienced the blessing of successful careers, many are eager to carry on their energies by doing for others here in the Church, the communities, and the world

through our benevolence and outreach programs. Those members who offer their talents in the Stephens Ministry program epitomize them. The strengths of this Church developed by these people are:

- **A MATURE, LOVING CONGREGATION.** The typical member is retired here, away from his/her original or most recent home state, and living some distance from immediate offspring. This fact augments their positive Christian disposition, encouraging an extension of their individual devotion toward neighbors and friends with genuine caring and respect.
- **A BENEVOLENT CONGREGATION.** In the intended absence of traditional church pledge campaigns, financial contributions to grow this Church, and support its scrupulously selected outreach programs, have been consistently and consummately successful.
- **A TALENTED, VOLUNTEERING CONGREGATION.** The Church continues to attract retired and semi retired members willing and able to turn their innate energies to serve in the meaningful and prominent roles of essential leadership necessary for effective governance. We are additionally blessed with highly efficient staff members.
- **A GIFTED CHOIR.** The membership includes a healthy contingent of devoted people with beautiful voices. This choir invariably brings an elevated degree of inspiration to those assembled. They are led by an extraordinary music director who regularly inspires the congregation with his piano and organ preludes.

## OUR EDUCATION STRENGTH

The Education Committee of our Church has sponsored morning Bible Studies for men and women, as well as a mid-week coed discussion series on topics of religious significance. In addition, it oversees the Children's Sunday School, sponsors the Stephen Ministry Program and arranges periodic evening lectures for the benefit of the Verde communities.

Our education team works cooperatively with the St. Dominic Mission educational team. Together we co-sponsor a men's and women's retreat every other year.

Our Library was the inspiration of a number of women who had been involved in churches that had libraries for their congregations and Sunday Schools. We now have over 1400 volumes composed of reference material, Christian subjects, Christian fiction and biography, and periodicals.

#### OUR MUSIC STRENGTH

Music has always been an important part of our worship service. At the Community Church of the Verdes we sing anthems and responses that correspond to the liturgical theme of the sermon. The Music Director works closely with the pastor to create a beautiful and inspirational service. An active Bell Choir has recently been established. It is comprised of members from our church as well as St. Dominic's, and performs for both congregations.

### **Church Growing Edges**

Just as our community is one of leaders, our church also is a congregation of leaders. This is a great gift because there is much experience and real Christian commitment. On the other hand, the great abundance of talent can occasionally present conflict needing resolution.

Because our community is surrounded by beautiful Arizona desert, many residents spend only "vacation" time in the Verde's and therefore may not get in the habit of regular church attendance. Because they view themselves as part-time or snowbird church participants, they don't feel the need or desire to get "involved" in a meaningful church relationship. More than 2/3rds of our residents vacate the community for three to four months during the summer, leaving the church with only limited attendance. Even those who do have church interests have many choices in nearby communities to attend the church of their denomination.

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