

# Pantano Baptist Church, est. 1966

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## **A brief history**

Pantano Baptist Church was founded in Tucson, Arizona by four families meeting in a home on Timrod Street. The mission grew and in 1965 constituted into Pantano Baptist Church. In 1972 we built our first building, a 4,308 square foot chapel that served as our sanctuary, and also included all of our Sunday school classrooms. Sixteen years later a new sanctuary was built, as well as an education building and church office. Our campus includes the main church building with space for a 100 member choir on stage and a fully functioning baptistry, an education building housing Sunday School classrooms and a nursery, the fellowship hall (our original church building), and the church office. Throughout the years, thousands of people have entered the doors, some came only once, others stayed.

For over 40 years our church experienced steady and constant growth, with families as diverse as the City of Tucson. Our growth was a result of several factors; our former Pastor of 25 years, Glen Foster, who is the CBF West Coordinator, lively music, strong sermons and regular activities were all contributing factors to an active membership. Weekly activities include a group chat where members are encouraged to ask questions and discuss answers. No topic is off limits with the exception of politics. One of many women's ministries is a group of ladies that sew dresses that are then sent to little girls in need around the world. Other church activities include potluck lunches, and a variety show that showcases the many talents of our members.

Participation and support to several groups and organizations has always been a big part of church operation. Providing support and being an active participant with Tucson Refugee Ministry has blessed our church with numerous families. We have supported and continue to support many other missions and organizations;

Arizona Baptist Children Services  
Sister Jose (local ministry to homeless women)  
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship  
Caring Ministries (local ministry to homeless and poor)  
Greg Long, Navajo Bible Translation Project  
Southern Baptist Convention  
Youth on Their Own (Helping homeless youth)  
Dress a girl

Our relationship with Tucson Refugee Ministry stands out among them all.. In the past we have hosted refugee families, have taught them English, and helped them transition into their new lives here.

At the heart of our church is the love of God and our neighbor, the love of music, and a desire to make a positive impact in our community. Our music style ranges from more traditional piano and organ sound to country gospel sets. We enjoy many different styles of worship music and enjoy the variety in our services.

Loving one another was commanded by Jesus and something we try to live by every day. It has been our main motto for over 15 years, and we believe it to be the best approach at being a witness and true servant for the Lord.

For the past ten years our church has seen a steady decline in membership and attendance. There are several contributing factors. Among the most prevalent are:

- An Aging Church
- Lack of outreach to young people and families

The COVID-19 epidemic exacerbated these problems. With an inability to do any type of focused outreach, and not being able to meet in person, the problems seem more evident now.

Current active membership is about 130, Sunday worship counts about 50-60 and Sunday

School is just beginning again since being suspended during COVID epidemic. Current budget is about \$250,000. We have one part time secretary, and a part time custodian.

## **What We Believe**

The church constitution and By-Laws are better suited at explaining this. What we will add is that our church has a strong independent streak. We most closely align with Cooperative Baptist Fellowship but have tried to keep an open mind to other Baptist entities, as evident by our continued contributions to SBC and other organizations. We fully accept women in all areas of service of our church and previously/currently have women in leadership roles. Over the years our church has hosted a Spanish speaking church for a latino congregation, a Korean Baptist Church, and regular rehearsals for a Chinese Choir.

<https://www.pantanobaptistchurch.org/constitution.html>

## **Geographic Area**

Tucson is the second largest city in Arizona, with a population of over 992,763 according to most recent stats. We are about 70 miles from the Mexican border and enjoy mild winters and dry summers.

Pantano Baptist Church is located on the east side of Tucson. What was once a small neighborhood church on the outskirts of town is now a church in the middle of an active urban sprawl. Our neighborhood is a well established residential area that includes homes, apartments, mobile home parks, and assisted living facilities. The church is centrally located in zip code 85710, which has over 50,000 residents living in a three mile radius. Tucson is a multicultural city with ethnic backgrounds from many parts of the world. Our church membership has, at one point, included people from Asia, Africa, Europe, Central and South America. Our current membership includes people from Japan, China, Spain, Mexico, and parts of Africa.

## **Outlook**

We are very aware of the challenges facing our church. We are committed to making positive changes, increasing our membership, and having a greater impact in our community. Our location within the city, strong foundation, and mortgage free campus give us a great opportunity to turn things around.

## **Search Committee Members**

Carlos Campos  
Diane Toorian  
Anna Prescott  
Kathy Fisher  
Sandy Wilson