

Palm Leaf

Church of the Palms

December 2017

Connect with God, find community, make a difference!
We are an Open and Affirming church—You are welcome here!

Annual Christmas Eve Candle Lighting Service Sunday, December 24th

The 7 PM candlelight service will feature carols and readings as we re-live the story of God's great love.

This is the most beautiful and moving service of the year, and it is highly recommended for all ages. Several of our people will be assisting in the service, our Bells Choir will be ringing and the choir will sing.

You may pick-up your Poinsettia after this service.

This year we invite you to light a candle in honor or remembrance of a loved one. The candle vessels will be on each side of the Communion Table. Please feel free at anytime before or during our service, to come forward and light one of these special tributes.

Candles will be provided.



Pastor Paul Whitlock

A Letter from Paul

Palm Leaf...A Letter From Paul

Advent: Preparing the Way with the Gift of Less

THE COMING OF ADVENT marks for all of us a season of gift-giving. We like to express our love to family members and friends through material gifts. And we live in a commercialized culture that encourages us to take pleasure in our purchasing. So, we are vulnerable to the preoccupation of collecting things. Our personal effects just seem to close in around us, eventually filling our space, crowding us out.

BUT AS WE SING in "Joy to the World," Advent is a season for every heart to prepare Christ room. That could mean removing the clutter from our lives to allow space for Christ's coming. The season is busy and intense for most of us. Emptying and simplifying strike us as seasonally inappropriate. We think of doing more and more, not less and less.

A SPIRITUAL HOUSECLEANING complete with rummage sale, recycling, and a trip to the dump, is not an Advent tradition most folks ever consider. But a prayerful assessment of our lives may reveal habits and expectations that no longer fit our deeper yearnings. Just as we give away clothing we have outgrown, we may need to let go of worn-out rituals of how we celebrate Christmas.

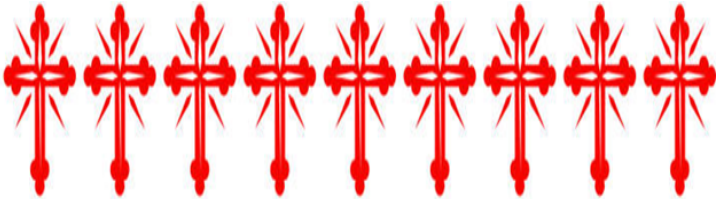
- Simplifying our gift-giving patterns may be one.
- Finding non-material ways to say "I love you" may be another.

*Less may be more in the economy
of God especially when it comes
to making room for Christ.*

This Advent, do a little housecleaning in the attic of your soul.

Shalom,

Paul



Christmas Offering 2017

'Veterans of the Cross'

Once again, this year we will participate in this appeal that assists retired ministers and missionaries (and their surviving spouses) who have tiny incomes.

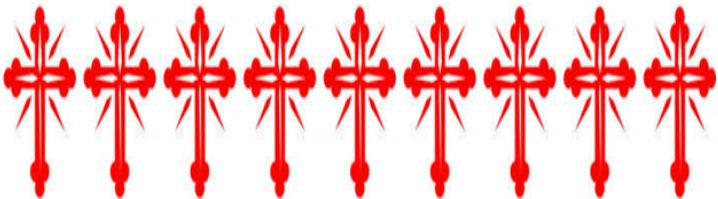
The Christmas Fund also assists in emergency situations with still-serving clergy and missionaries. You may use the special envelope in your box, or envelopes are located in the seat back of the pew in front of you.

Mark your check or envelope "Christmas."

Thank you, in advance, for your generosity.

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man who warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

Timothy 2:1-7



Ideas for Meaningful Christmas Gifts!

If you are looking for a meaningful way to give gifts this season, here are some suggestions:

The Penny Magic Table in King Hall always has an assortment of wonderful items, including the best "scrubbies" in the universe, hand-made "God Is Still Speaking" aprons "and shopping bags... also designed and made by our Service Project Group!

Fair Trade items (coffee, chocolate, teas, olive oil and other delicious items are available December 10th or by contacting Carolyn Modeen or e-mailing Carolyn at modeen@royaloakslife.net.

Bev Jensen makes incredible custom designer handbags. Get your orders in early! Call Bev at 623-972-9136. Gifts are the most meaningful when they are homemade and come from the heart.

They really are!





Happy December!



Tis the season of bright shiny objects, smells of cookies in the oven, and the sounds of wonder and delight. Ah, the Christmas season is upon us!

I am delighted to host a "Women's Discussion Group" on Wednesday, December 6th at 10:30 am to chat about what we want as a group going forward. In the past, the group has been a Bible study, but I have been in conversation with some women here in the church, and we were thinking we could expand the discussions to current topics and issues that we have specifically as women. Plus, it is a great opportunity to make new women friends here at the Church.

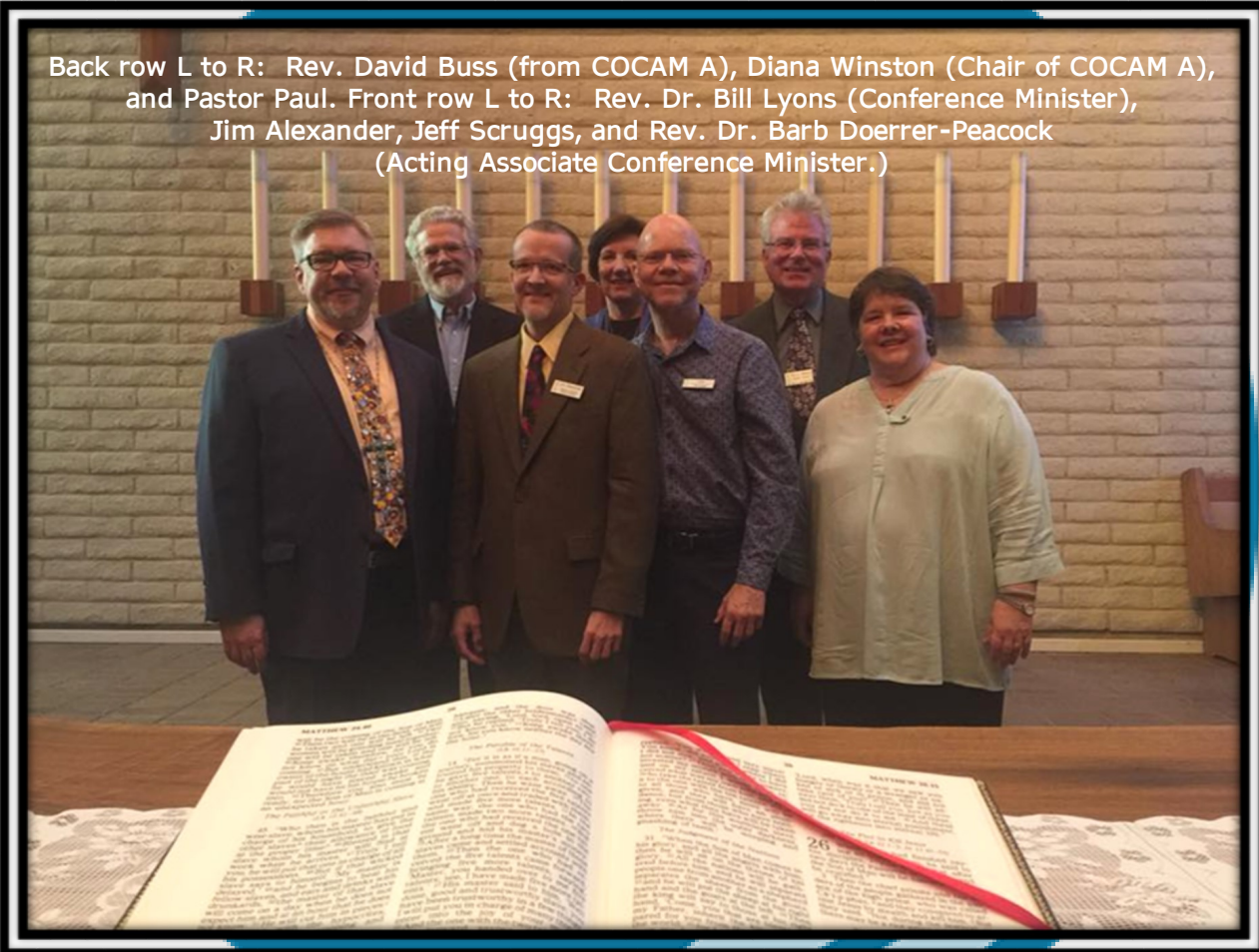
Want a break from all that learning we have been doing throughout the year? Our Board of Lifelong Learning is planning a FUN day on Monday, December 11th from 10:00 – 11:30 am. We plan to do a little debriefing on all our wonderful programs we had throughout the year, plus have some fellowship, finger paints, cookies, and coffee. We will get serious again in January.

Finally, I ask you, our congregation, to continue to keep our GriefShare leaders and participants in your prayers during the holiday season. Loss devastates, and holiday cheer does not come easy. Let us also pray for those who are grieving silently. This is a blessed time of year in the church and may we be the Christ light to those who are hurting.

Amen, amen, and amen.

Debby

Back row L to R: Rev. David Buss (from COCAM A), Diana Winston (Chair of COCAM A), and Pastor Paul. Front row L to R: Rev. Dr. Bill Lyons (Conference Minister), Jim Alexander, Jeff Scruggs, and Rev. Dr. Barb Doerrler-Peacock (Acting Associate Conference Minister.)



Congratulations to Jim Alexander on his unanimous approval by the Ecclesiastical Council of Southwest Conference of the UCC held at The Church of the Palms on November 19, 2017. We are so very, very proud of Jim!



a just world for all

just

world for

The Board of Mission and Outreach invites you to:

“Church of the Palms Baby Shower”

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord, we have the chance to donate to other new babies in our area through New Life Center.

New Life Center is a non-profit corporation that provides shelter, counseling, advocacy and other services necessary to assist victims of domestic violence and their families build sustainable, violence-free lives.

In addition to safety and shelter, New Life provides clothing and personal items to over 150 women and children each day. There is a special need for baby items. No need to wrap. What could be simpler!

Suggested list of needs:

Diapers are the most needed item!

(sizes: 3,4,5,6)

Diaper rash cream
Baby lotion
Baby bottles
Sippy cups
Bibs and Pacifiers
Diapers!!!
Receiving Blankets
Pacifiers
Baby wipes
Booties



All during Christmas, gifts may be placed under the narthex tree or in the Playpen!

Please drop off donations by
December 24th

Service Project Craft Group Christmas Gifts Galore!

A necklace for sister Shirley, a pillow for cousin Elaine; a hat and scarf for brother Albert; earrings for friend Marge; a lap robe for Glenn; slippers for grandchild Pam; a light weight quilt for Fred; stuffed animals for Joyce and all the grandkids; a table runner and placemats for neighbor Liz; a "small comfort" for friend Helen who is in a care center and would welcome a small reminder that you remember her.

The Service Project Craft group has been busy making things for your Christmas giving. The new kind of scrubbies are great, we have refrigerator towels to match any decor, some holiday items we have made, walker bags, poinsettia hat pads, and much more! Suggested prices are very reasonable or pay what you can. Visit our table in King Hall for all your holiday shopping.

Even if you don't sew or knit, the Service Project Craft Group can use your assistance in helping us sort, stuff, cut, trace, tie threads, or Help with whatever projects we have going. We meet Wednesday mornings from 9 - 11 in the board room.

As we create, we share our stories, concerns, and blessings. Come on in, have a cup of coffee, and see what is going on.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Seeking justice through prayer, action, love, ministry & support!

The Church of the Palms Social Justice Action Team is a vital ministry in and of our church. We are currently active with Refugee Focus, LGBTQ issues, Palestine-Israel discussions, and Religious & Racial Appreciation Support. Our new BIG endeavor is Environment issues that run the gamut from recycling, climate change, pollution, and sustainability. Our work on this new project can seem overwhelming, however we aim to learn and grow to be more conscientious and productive than we already are.

Have you heard this "If we don't care for the earth, we will not have a place to live?" Maybe you have said it yourself. If you are interested in raising the awareness here at The Church of the Palms on the 5 R's (recycle, reduce, reuse, repair, refuse), then The Social Justice Action Team's subcommittee on environmental issues might be a place for your time and talents. Contact John Durbin for more information. Join us in respecting the earth!



Office Holiday Closings

The church office will be closed on December 25th and 26th, and January 1st and 2nd in observance of the Holidays!


Christmas Eve

Candlelight Service will begin at 7 p.m. on Sunday the 24th.

Christmas Eve Day, Worship will begin as

usual at 10 a.m. In hopes of getting everyone off to a blessed family day, we will not be having Fellowship in King Hall.

Regular hours will resume on January 3rd.



Our annual "Sanctuary Beautification" will soon be in full swing. As in years past, it's time for ordering Poinsettias!

We will be decorating our Sanctuary with vibrant, beautiful multi-colored poinsettias.

We invite you to memorialize your flowers by filing out your offering envelope marked "Poinsettia" including \$10 and give it to the church office by December 20th . Please honor this deadline so the memorial bulletin can be prepared for Christmas.

Those folks without giving envelopes may pick up a Poinsettia coupon on the Opportunity Table in the Narthex, fill it out and return it to the office or put it in an envelope and drop it in the giving basket on Sunday.

Please print clearly.



*I thank him who has given me strength,
Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me
faithful, appointing me to his service.*

1 Timothy 1:12

You are invited in Presence and Prayers to joyfully celebrate the Ordination Service of

James E. Alexander

Sunday, January 7th at 3:00 p.m.

In the Sanctuary of
The Church of the Palms.

Reception to follow in King Hall.

Copies of Jim's Ordination Paper are available in the church office and on his web page at:

<http://www.jimalexanderofthepalms.org>



The Service Project Craft Group

A special remembrance of a loved one is a wonderful Christmas gift!

The Service Project Craft Group is taking orders for a handmade Remembrance Pillow designed by Carol Reynolds. These pillows are made from the shirt or blouse of a loved one or friend for you to hug from time to time in remembrance. This pillow has been such a big hit with folks and would make a perfect Holiday gift for yourself or a loved one. Order blanks are available in the narthex on the Opportunity Table (by the big handmade pillow!) Get your order in today!

Our Board of Lifelong Learning

January dates and classes to be announced

Sunday Morning Discussion at 8:30 am presents The Great Courses "Confucius, Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad" taught by Professor Mark W. Muesse. In this course, we examine these four figures both separately and comparatively in an effort to grasp the essential features of their lives and teachings and to explore the factors that contributed to their greatness. This course includes 36 lectures, but feel free to stop in to view the ones that interest you the most. Come join the Sunday morning community of lifelong learners!

December 03
The Jewish and Roman Worlds of Jesus

December 10
The Son of Mary

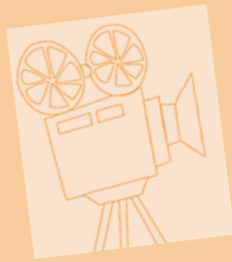
December 17
The First 30 Years



Help decorate for Christmas!

Everyone is invited to come to the Palms on Saturday, December 2nd 10 a.m. to help decorate for the Advent and Christmas seasons.

Come for a few minutes or longer to help us transform our building—and perhaps our spirits. Creative decorators are welcome, as are cheerleaders!



Page to Projector



This series of films will focus on stories that have moved from the written page to the movie screen.

From a short story, F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," to a magazine serial, Leo Tolstoy's "Anna Karenina," to novels set in the 50s, 60s and 2000s. These include Patricia Highsmith's "The Price of Salt" (also titled "Carol," the name of the film as well) Julian Barnes' Man Booker Prize winner "The Sense of an Ending," and Robert Harris' taut thriller "The Ghost Writer."

Anyone who is interested may also read the corresponding fiction before viewing but it is not necessary for the enjoyment of watching these finely crafted cinematic works of art.

Jack and Pastor Judy will be taking a long delayed trip and will be gone the months of February and March. Films will resume again in April.

Friday, December 15th

Carol

Friday, January 19th

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button

February: No Movie

March: No Movie

Friday, April 20th

Anna Karenina

Friday, May 18th

The Ghost Writer

Friday, June 15th

The Sense of an Ending

Please Call the office 623-977-8359

- ◆ When you feel the church can assist you in any way.
- ◆ When you or a member of your family is admitted to the hospital so that visits can be arranged and proper people notified.
- ◆ When your class or group plans to meet so that a room can be reserved for you and placed on the church calendar.
- ◆ When either your home address or phone number changes so the church records can be amended.
- ◆ When you are planning to move-either out of town or locally.

Your Board of Lifelong Learning

We continue to offer classes on Sunday mornings at 8:30 am and on Monday mornings from 10 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. Monday, December 4th is our last "From Jesus to Christ" session. Monday, December 11th Debby Stinton will host a "Fun" day. We plan to do a little debriefing on all our wonderful programs we had throughout the year, plus have some fellowship, finger paints, cookies, and coffee. We will get serious again in January.

Women's Discussion Group

Next Meeting Dec. 6th 10:30

The Church of the Palms Chapel.

Join us for lively discussion and study.

Bring a Friend!



Annual report 2017
Reports due soon!

A Friendly Reminder

A reminder to all chairpersons: Please have your annual report in to the office by December 15! When possible please submit the reports as an e-mail attachment to manager@thepalms.org. In order to cut down on how large our Annual Reports have been in the past, we are asking this year that you keep your reports to 350 (ish) words. This year we also have a special Service Auction and Luncheon planned. The sign-up sheet will be out for anyone who wishes to stay after the meeting. Thank you in advance for your timely response to this request. Working together we can eliminate any last minute changes and be ready to go for Annual Meeting on Saturday, January 27th, 2018.



Refugee Focus

**“Seek Justice through Prayer,
Action, Love, Ministry & Support.”**

Church of the Palms Social Justice Team visit to Refugee Focus:

Members of the Church of the Palms Social Justice Team recently traveled on our church bus to downtown Phoenix to visit an organization called Refugee Focus. They met with staff members and learned of programs provided to refugees from war torn countries who have been fortunate enough to make it to our wonderful country.

Many of these individuals have spent years in refugee camps after escaping violence and indescribable hostile living conditions. Thanks to the efforts of Refugee Focus, an arm of Lutheran Social Services, refugees acclimate to, and become contributing members of, our community. Our Social Justice Team is a part of the Board of Mission and Outreach. The mission of the Social Justice team is to “Seek Justice through Prayer, Action, Love, Ministry & Support.”



2018 Three "T" Social & Service Auction
Sharing TIME, TALENTS AND TREASURE
to Support Church of the Palms Vital Ministries



Organized and Conducted by the Boards of Stewardship & Evangelism

When: Saturday, January 27th in conjunction with the annual meeting

Where: Sanctuary for the annual meeting & King Hall for lunch & auction

Who: Members and friends of Church of the Palms

Purpose: The purposes of the 2018 Three "T" Social & Service Auction are to:
Enrich the lives of others through the donation of time, talent or treasure.
Provide an opportunity to socialize and fellowship with other members and friends of our church.
Provide funds to support the Boards of Mission & Outreach, Life Long Learning and Evangelism.

Format: 10:00 – 10:45 Annual meeting

10:45 – 11:45 Lunch (Brats and buns provided by church. Sides dishes provided by some attendees) Silent Auction* during meal
(* "T" - TALENTS - Donate something that you make or talent/skill that you possess to be bid on by participants of the social or members of the church from a prepared list of products or talents prior to the social).

11:45 – 12:45 Live Auction**and desserts. (** "T" TIME - Donate your time to a church member or friend in need. Examples include: transportation, shopping, pet sitting, help around the home, washing the car, etc.. ~BE CREATIVE~ that will be bid on during a live auction at the social dessert time).

12:45 – 1:00 Raffle Prizes*** and wrap up. (*** "T" TREASURES - Purchase raffle tickets for opportunity to win a treasure chest of valuable items donated by local businesses.

Over for Examples of Past Service Auction Items

Examples of Past Service Auction Items

- Homemade tamales
- Pet portrait
- Transportation
- Jewelry
- Homemade bread
- Dining experience
- Bird walk
- Bird watching
- Quilt
- Timeshare week
- Painting
- Luncheon for four
- Closet organization
- Dog grooming
- Car service
- One hour of music
- Homemade candy
- Portrait
- Homemade pizza delivery
- Quilted items
- Jewelry
- Timeshare weekend
- Sloppy joes
- Homemade pie
- Homemade basket
- Quilted items
- Cork wreath
- Holiday decoration
- Autographed books
- Exotic mask
- Others



Palms-Single-Solo -Fellowship/Fun

IMPORTANT:
Saturday
Mall Walks and Game Days Discontinued

BYOB
and
Munchies

DECEMBER 2017 EVENTS

Casual
Dress

“AN AFTERNOON DELIGHT” 12-5-17

ALL Folks welcome. Single, solo & couples! ! !

RHYTHM RAMBLERS: Live 16-piece Big Band

Tuesday, December 5th at Sundial Rec Center. 2:30-4:30



Meet outside the
Rec. Center
\$5.00- 7.00 ticket.

Bring a friend or come alone
Please Join Us COUPLES!
This Christmas DANCE
is always sensational!!



**If you remember the Big
Band Sound and miss
hearing it...
The Rhythm
Ramblers are
for you!**



**Contact
Ruthann Bilkey
regarding
Sun City Players
Theater Tickets.
rmbilkey@juno.com**

Games Will start up again in January!



The Sanctuary Choir
Presents
Christmas at The Palms
December 17, 2017
10:00 a.m.
Worship Service
Bring a friend and enjoy



The Taste of Christmas

Food plays a big part in the Christmas season. On Sunday, December 17, we will have The Sanctuary Choir Christmas Musical and "A Taste of Christmas" after worship. For our regular fellowship hour, we are inviting the whole congregation to bring a food items that reminds you of Christmas - in terms of food, what makes Christmas, Christmas? Maybe it's that special cookie or dish your grandmother used to make that brings back the memories of Christmas. It could be a pie or bread that reminds you of Christmas and was served only during that season. Whatever that taste may be, bring it and share it on Sunday, December 17th so that everyone else can enjoy it, too!



December Birthday's 2017

- 12/03 Pat Durbin
- 12/05 Sharon Christenson
- 12/07 Rhonna Fiihr
- 12/08 Donald Marselle
- 12/08 Ruthie Whitlock
- 12/09 Janet Bozgan
- 12/11 Chris Johnson
- 12/11 Calvin Lane
- 12/11 Roline Baker
- 12/12 P.J. O'Donnell
- 12/13 Bonnie Tweedy
- 12/15 Pastor Len Silvester
- 12/15 Carol Bryan
- 12/17 Glenn Fiihr
- 12/18 Howard Schenk
- 12/19 Irene Kozlowski
- 12/19 Yolanda Brown
- 12/21 Herb Carson
- 12/22 Brian Hannon
- 12/21 Jose Baker-Webster
- 12/25 Leonard Weiss

OPEN CALL FOR ARTWORK

(Your)

(Art)

(Here)

The Board of Worship and Fine Arts is giving you a lot of notice of about the upcoming Palms' Art Show.

February 24th and 25th of 2018, we will be featuring creative people in our own Congregation. We will host the show on a Saturday with a follow-up viewing on Sunday morning until noon. All Media are welcome, including crafts and collectables. Space consideration in King Hall will determine size restrictions for individual showings.

A Sign-up sheet will soon be on the Opportunity Table in the Narthex.

Get Your Creative Juices Flowing!



GRIEF SHARE®

EVERY FRIDAY, AT 1 P.M.

GriefShare Sessions

WILL BE HELD IN THE BOARD ROOM OF
THE CHURCH OF THE PALMS FROM
1 P.M. TO 3 P.M.

All are welcome!

Sharing your loss makes the
burden of grief
easier to carry.

December Fellowship Breakfast

Tuesday, December 12th, 8:00 a.m.

Enjoy a full, hot breakfast provided by our always smiling kitchen team of Maria and George Wall and Bonnie Green. There is no charge for our breakfast. The free will giving basket will be out. Invite a friend or neighbor!

Our December breakfast fellowship program will be presented by Sharon Christenson. A once in a lifetime expedition cruise from Columbo, Sri Lanka to Kolkata, India. The DVD to be presented was photographed by a professional photographer with help from a drone. This expedition was the very first cruise ship allowed by its government into Bangladesh. Also included were visits to several Andaman Islands. Excursions were mostly done via zodiac boats and tuk-tuks. You will see people and places that few have ever seen. Don't miss this exciting and informative presentation.



In Memory

Mary Lou Jindra

11-6-17

Brian McShane (Son to Darlene McShane)

10-29-2017

Dennis Lee Jensen (Father to Debby Stinton)

Walter Raymond Kunze

9-28-2017



Used Bikes for Hart Pantry

If you have a used bike to donate to the HART (Helping At Risk Teens) Pantry for use by the teens of this great organization, please contact: Jan at 623-875-7015 or Ruth Langford 252-259-5331. Don't worry about the condition of your donation; the bikes are repaired before they are gifted. HART Pantry gets them to our at-risk teens as soon as they can get them refurbished and checked out, sending along a new bike lock with each bike so they are protected.

God bless you!

Jan Eckstein and the Board of Mission and Outreach

December Needs

Hi all!

Can't believe the holiday season is already upon us! Hart Pantry is once again gearing up to give Christmas Gift Bags to the At-Risk teens that are already receiving weekend food bags each Friday. We have had our biggest request ever this year for 102 Christmas Gift Bags, and we know we can't complete this mission without your help! We are sincerely grateful for the help you have provided us in the past, and hope that we can count on your help again.

This year our "wish list" is fairly short:

1. Hoodies (for both boys and girls, Sizes: Small to X-Large also Teen/Adult sizes)
2. No-show socks (boys and girls) Teen/Adult size
3. \$25 Target or Walmart Gift Cards (so teens can purchase a pair of shoes)

Of course, cash donations of any amount would also be appreciated and will be put towards the purchase of the above items.

It is greatly appreciated if you can spread the word within your organization of the Hart Pantry's needs in this mission. If you would like Hart Pantry to provide a donation box for your location, just let us know. The last day for donations will be December 9, as volunteers will be wrapping the bags on December 16.

Hart Pantry Contacts for donation boxes, questions or for picking up donations:

Carol Spiegelhoff: 602-692-3595

Brenda Hedt: 602-790-8854

Thank you in advance for your help with this



Services in December

Lord's Day Service each week at 10 a.m.

*Fellowship Time in
King Hall at 11 a.m.*

For bus pick-up:

Please Call Mary Kennicott: 623-249-8999



Sunday, December 3: This is the first Sunday of Advent. The sanctuary will be decorated, we will light the HOPE candle. Pastor Paul will be preaching and bringing us a top ten list for hope in this crazy, mixed-up age. Read Isaiah 64:1-4. It will be a communion Sunday.

Sunday, December 10: PEACE is the theme of the day. Read Mark 1:1-8. How can we break out of our destructive cycles and walk in a new direction? To bring peace into our lives, we need to adjust our sails and let God move us. Pastor Paul will be preaching.

Sunday, December 17: This Sunday will be filled with JOY and will be our Christmas Musical. Read John 1:6-8, 19-28. Pastor Paul will give a short homily. After worship we will enjoy our Taste of Christmas (see the article on this).

Sunday, December 24th: This Sunday will be filled with LOVE. Title Perplexed? Mary, an Angel, Elizabeth, and a Song - What can we make out of all of that? Debby Stinton will be delivering the message. Scripture, Luke 1:26-38, 46b-55

Sunday, Christmas Eve: The service will start at 7:00 p.m. We will journey to Bethlehem using candles, carols, anthems, special music, and scriptures. Read Luke 2:1-20. Pastor Paul will be preaching.

Sunday, December 31: God's Children Scripture: Galatians 4:4-7. A reflection on being called a child of God and what God gives us as God's children. Debby Stinton will be delivering the message.



If you use Facebook, you are invited to "like" Church of the Palms and become a friend of the church.

New!

The Palms Community Photo Album - share your photos of church events!

goo.gl/u2QtrE

www.thepalms.org

We offer:

- Sermon Gallery
- Paul at the Palms
- News and Events
- The Palm Leaf Newsletter
- Monthly Calendar
- General Synod News
- Photos
- Welcome New Member Dates



The Church of the Palms
14808 N. Boswell Boulevard,
Sun City, AZ 85351
Phone (623-977-8359)



Office Hours:

Monday-Thur. 8am-2pm
Friday- 8am to Noon

Office e-mail: manager@thepalms.org
Website: www.thepalms.org

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



Drawn together by the Holy Spirit, we are a distinct and diverse community of Christians that comes together as one church, joining faith and action.

In covenant with the church in all of its settings, we serve God in the co-creation of a just and sustainable world as made manifest in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

"That they may all be one," Jesus, speaking in prayer. —John 17:21

Palm Leaf is a monthly newsletter from the Church of the Palms that makes it easy for you to keep up with opportunities, events, and friends at church.

Articles deadline: 15th of each month

You may submit an article or information for an article by:

Email (manager@thepalms.org)
Phone (623-977-8359),
Or drop it off at the church.

Office Staff:

Pastor Paul Whitlock, Senior Minister
Jim Alexander, Assistant Pastor
Debby Stinton, Assistant Pastor
Deborah Martin, Secretary