



Church of the Palms
United Church of Christ
Sun City, AZ
www.thepalms.org

Important Phone Numbers
National Alliance on Mental Illness Help Line
1-800-950-6264 <https://www.nami.org/help>
Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800.273.TALK
Veteran's Crisis Line 800.273.8255 *press 1*
Pastoral Care—Pastor Jim Alexander
623.792.5295

The Church of the Palms' W.I.S.E. focus will be combined for November and December. Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's will be experienced differently than ever before in our lifetime because of COVID 19, traveling restrictions, sizes of groups recommended for safety. Amid celebrations and losses, we all come with anticipation and hopes of something to touch our souls as only the Divine can.

"PROMISES" and reminders of God's continued presence can comfort and embolden our choices of how to respond to the myriad of emotions that holidays bring. Most of us own our nostalgic tendencies during this season. That brings sorrow and joyful memories. So let's go exploring about God's "PROMISES" for eight weeks.

Please read the overview and scripture ties for each week and pray that Emmanuel will open you to new ways of celebrating the holidays of 2020. God *is* with you!

O is for Overture: *"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you."*
—Jeremiah 1:5

Like orchestral music played at the beginning of an opera or oratorio, God extends a gracious overture prior to our very beginning. The energy put forth is from the Divine. We don't have to work at being loved. Initiation is of God as we find in Psalms 22:9-11. "Yet it was You who took me from the womb, you kept me safe on my mother's breast. On you I was cast from birth, and since my mother bore me you have been my God. Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help."

As the innocent child experiences the pangs of birth in the womb, we too experience pain and stress in our daily lives. And as God took us from our mother's womb, God continues to provide the succor we need at stressful times. God does not go away, but always stays the initiator. Can I respond to that Life Force and continue to lean on God? Do not go far from me ... do not leave me. The overture of our life started at birth, but the song goes on and is unending.

©KFK

A RITUAL TO GUIDE US THROUGH THESE HOLIDAYS

Kay Klinkenborg offered a ritual to assist us during these unusual holidays at the Nov. 10 Tuesday Breakfast in Your PJs. This ritual acknowledges God is the ultimate "LIGHT" and is never absent from us, even when we can't see it or feel God's presence.

She suggested each home make an "altar" for "HONORING AND MEMORIAL." An altar is a place to honor, to have a place to focus thoughts, a place you go with intention. Chose a location: center of dining room table, end table, any room in your home. You can place the items on the table, or a tray or plate.

Use two battery-operated candles or tealights to place on your altar: one to honor those who cannot be physically present with you, the second to Memorialize the one(s) you have lost this year or in past years.

Select photos, ornaments, mementos, any item that speaks to you of these persons in your life. Let your creativity flow. Have a small tablet or piece of paper and pen on which to write a memory, gratitude, etc. Each message you capture will be a blessing. Choose to pause at the altar as you feel led — once a week, daily, or particularly on the holiday. Remember to "temper," as Shea Darian has taught us in our grief times; pace yourself, don't make this a compulsion. Some questions to consider during this blessing time at the altar:

What are memories that are special? What ways did this person bring light to my life? What blessings do I wish to send them? What blessing have I received from them?

There are 2 (two) free tealights for each household in the church office. They are LED battery operated. You may pick them up Monday-Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. They are the gift of Life Long Learning Board and the Care Team of the Church of the Palms.