



THE PALM LEAF

Church of The Palms

EST 1969

14808 N Boswell Blvd
Sun City, AZ 85351



CELEBRATING THE PAST;
EMBRACING THE FUTURE

A Letter from Paul

We are in a holding pattern regarding our in-person worship. What do we do while we wait?

What do you do while you wait? Let's say you're waiting for the elevator. Some people stare straight ahead at the doors as if they plan to open them with their X-ray vision. Other people press the button over and over as if it's going to jump two floors with every push. The extroverts among us decide to get acquainted with the other people who are waiting. Tony Campolo suggests singing in just such a situation. You're going to be traveling with these folks (at least in the elevator), he suggests, "What better way to get to know them than by singing?" I confess, I've done such a thing.



What do you do while you wait? What do you do while you wait at a traffic light? Some people try to decode the vanity license plates around them or read bumper stickers. More and more people make phone calls nowadays. Some people work on their fingernails or pluck their eyebrows in the rearview mirror or sing with the radio as if they believe they're invisible behind their car windows.

What do you do while you wait? What do you do while you wait in the doctor's office? It is a more anxious waiting, of course, and usually a lot longer. There are often magazines to read but I try not to touch anything in those waiting situations. And the TV blaring away doesn't help me, either.

What do you do while you wait? What do you do while you wait for your church to begin in-person worship? Many watch the weekly video worship. Some go to classes on our Bridges platform. Many have their bank send a check or they themselves mail one. Some pray daily for the leadership of the church during this pandemic. Others send notes and make calls to check on the membership. Some are bringing food for the food bank or school supplies for the Hart Pantry.

What is God calling you to do while you wait? We are not closed. We are deployed. Until we meet again for in-person worship, what are you doing while you wait?

Shalom, Paul

Everything In Moderation



By Judy Jondahl

Holidays have always been defined as family times for me, particularly Christmas, so this year I decided that since we cannot all be together for Christmas, I am going to focus on Christmas memories. Here are a couple.

On the top of my list of favorite Christmas memories occurred when I was six years old. My grandpa had been a contractor and built some wonderful houses. My favorite was the one he built for his family. I visited my aunt and uncle who lived there when I was five, and remember crawling onto grandpa's lap and making him promise he would build me a house just like it when I got "old." He crossed his heart and promised he would. The following year, grandma and grandpa came to our house early Christmas morning to be there when I came down the steps. My brother and I started down the steps and were told to stop and wait. After what seemed like "forever" in my six-year-old mind, grandpa and my older brother led me, eyes closed to the Christmas tree. WOW – was I surprised when I opened my eyes to see an exact replica of grandpa's house in a doll house for me. He and my brother had built it, and grandma had decorated it as it was when they lived there. I remember grandpa and my brother picking me up and twirling as grandpa said, "I promised, and here it is!" That was the last Christmas I got to spend with my grandpa, but every year I celebrate his promise.

Another of my favorite Christmas memories was when I was a senior in college. I was living in Des Moines, doing my public health nursing clinical. The day before I was to leave for Christmas break, my fiancé arrived during a snowstorm to take me home. In the morning, we were ready to cram my belongings into his VW Bug, but the snow and wind had almost buried the "bug." As I thought about the possibility of not being home for Christmas for the first time, my mom called. (She always knew when to call.) She assured me the roads would be open the next day, and then she said, "I promise this will be a Christmas you will never forget." A day and a half later, I arrived home and there was ALL of my family, including my brother and his family from Arizona. I hadn't seen them in over a year. So, in a small house with one bathroom, we celebrated. One of the joys was waking up one morning to find the sleeping bags on my bedroom floor missing the three little munchkins. I went downstairs, stepping carefully to avoid tripping on anyone sleeping on the living room floor and discovered I was the only one awake. Then I heard giggles coming from outside, and there were the three munchkins in pajamas playing in the snow for the first time in their short lives.

I would love to hear some of your favorite Christmas memories: judyjondahl@gmail.com.

As we celebrate this Christmas, let's focus on God's Promises for love & peace among all!



WORSHIP THEMES FOR *DECEMBER*

December 6: This Second Sunday of Advent we read from Mark 1:1-8. Prepare. How do we prepare for the peace which is Shalom? Pastor Paul will be preaching.

December 13: The Third Sunday of Advent. Pastor Paul will be preaching on Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11. Welcoming the coming Christ-child means being a servant.

December 20: Pastor Jim will be leading in a Blue Christmas Service. This meaningful time of worship will create space for us to set aside the "holiday cheer." It will help us reflect on the ways in which the Divine is with us through the struggles and losses that may be especially evident during this season.

December 24: From our families to yours. Pastors Jim and Paul, along with their families, will lead in spoken word and song and tell the coming of Christ.

December 27: Our video worship will be led by our Conference Minister, Rev. Dr. William Lyons, with the help of Members-in-Discernment (MIDs) – that's people preparing for ordination, including our own Debby Stinton and Shea Darian.



The graphic features a dark purple background with a bright star at the top center. The word "ADVENT" is written in large, multi-colored letters (red, orange, yellow, green, blue). Below it, the words "moments of" are in a smaller, white, lowercase font. At the bottom, "COMFORT & JOY" is written in large, blue, uppercase letters. The background has a subtle bokeh effect of light spots.

The Church of the Palms is offering an Advent Devotional and Daily Audio written and recorded by members of our church family. The book is available in the church office or on the [Daily Devotional](#) page of our website. Make sure to listen in every day of Advent to be blessed by the insights and inspiration of **Advent Moments of Comfort & Joy.**

An Update From: The Service Project Craft Group

The Service Project Craft Group has recently delivered 125 hats and 140 soap holders filled with bars of soap to HART for their holiday giving. We also provided 30 sewn and crocheted lap robes, throws, and afghans for homebound and care center residents. Thank you, Care Team, for delivering them! Before Christmas, we will have around 100 hats and scarves for Justa Center, which serves homeless people age 55+. The number of face masks we've made is beyond counting, and they are available for free in the church office if you need one. The unthinkable has happened! We ran out of yarn! Any texture, amount, or color will be appreciated. Leave it in the boardroom and let someone in the office know it is there so they can notify us to come pick it up. We appreciate your donations! Until we meet again in person, we'll be keeping our minds busy figuring out how to get our fingers to do what we think we are creating!

Provide Meals for Our I-Help Guests in December



Please contact Laurie Cathey at spkplg1941@hotmail.com or at 623.238.3826 or if you can provide meals for any of the following dates:

Dinner: November 30th; December 7th, 11th, 21st, and Christmas Dinner on the 25th.

Breakfast: December 1st, 5th, 8th, 12th, 22nd, and 26th.

Packed Lunch: December 8th 15th,

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



Mike Astle	12/3
Pat Durbin	12/3
Sharon Christenson	12/5
Rhonna Fiihr	12/7
Donald Marselle	12/8
Ruthie Whitlock	12/8
Fleur Benjamin	12/9
Janet Bozgan	12/9
Terry Hanson	12/12
Carol Bryan	12/15
Leonard Sylvester	12/15
Glenn Fiihr	12/17
Doris Hoy	12/17
Howard Schenk	12/18

Violet Jeffery	12/21
Charles Udstuen	12/21
Lisa Carlson	12/22
Brian Hannon	12/22
Julie Nichols	12/22
Andrea Stefanov	12/22
Sandy Miller	12/23
Shea Darian	12/30
Cynthia Kunkel	12/30



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 is 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, and sizes of groups recommended for safety. Amid the 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!

[Check out our Tools2Thrive Page](#)

P

Proclamation:

Isaiah 41:10
I will be your God.

R

Ready:

Psalm 32:18
God will be our guide.

O

Overture:

Jeremiah 1:5
Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you...

M

Mercy:

Hebrews 2:18; 4:15; 12:3
We never walk where Jesus hasn't already walked.

I

Initiator:

Psalm 42:1
As the hart panteth after the brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God.

S

Steadfast:

Psalm 123:1 *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.*
 Hebrews 13:5 *I will never leave you.*
 Isaiah 43:3,4 *God will carry us.*

E

Endued:

1 Peter 1:4
...to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away...

S

Shining Forth:

Deuteronomy 33:2
And he said, the Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them: he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with then thousands of saints...

Life Long Learning in December

LLL classes continue [online](#).



- ♦ **Current Issues & Faith**, Tuesdays, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Facilitated by Kay Klinkenborg.
Dec. 1-15: "J.E.S.U.S.A" DVD. An in-depth exploration of the relationship between Christianity and American nationalism and the violence that often emerges from it. Some featured speakers: Diana Butler Bass, Fr. John Dear, and Dwight Ford.
Dec. 22, 29: Will continue with DVDs and discussion regarding racism, white fragility, etc.
- ♦ **Jump Start**, Tuesdays, 4:00-5:00 p.m. Facilitated by John Durbin. **Prep for Sunday Sermon with Scripture/Discussion.**
- ♦ **Spiritual Growth**, Wednesdays, 10:30-11:30 a.m., except for the first Wednesday of the month, when class meets 11:00 a.m.-noon. Facilitated by Kay Klinkenborg.
Dec. 2: "Reshaping Religious Imagination for Humanity" DVD. Applying the new science/cosmology to our understanding of God, the universe and its implications for worship, prayer and liturgy.
Dec. 9-30: "The Divine Feminine: Its Place in Our Lives" and "God, Women and the World: A New Way To Tell The Story," by Sr. Joan Chittister, OSB. Part of a series: "The Human Spirit and the Times We Live In." Chittister explores how owning the feminine can deepen our connection to all of life and all people, discovering we have new eyes with which to see and new ears to hear.
- ♦ **Cosmic Christians**, Thursdays, 10:00-11:30 a.m. Facilitated by Linette Stenberg. **Discussion of the book "Begin Again" by Dr. Eddie Glaude, Jr.** The author examines the writings of James Baldwin and his impact on challenging racism in the USA.

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.

SHARE GOD'S LOVE



3GREATLOVES.ORG

Kairos Call to Action: The Fierce Urgency of Now

The *Kairos Call to Action* recently issued by the United Church of Christ's Council for Climate Justice builds on what Martin Luther King, Jr. called "the fierce urgency of now," and an understanding of Kairos time as time that is ripe, pregnant, and urgent time. The call to action urges congregations to begin a decade of focus on one of the UCC's "3 Great Loves": Care for Creation.

We, as the church, have the opportunity to assert that we are fully committed to our first calling as caretakers of God's creation. In contrast to destructive theologies of dominion/domination over the Earth, we have the opportunity to manifest a theology of kinship with creation and a spiritual connection to Mother Nature.

As Pope Francis put it in his encyclical, *Laudato Si': On the Care for our Common Home*, earth and human ecology are inextricably intertwined. That

means that as we care for creation, we also care for the other two great loves to which we in the UCC are committed: neighbor and children.

Climate science tells us that the next decade will be decisive if we are to interrupt the dangerous course of planetary warming that we are on. Now is the time.

In response to this call, the Social Justice Action Team at COTP has initiated a Creation Justice task force which will build on the steps taken by COTP in the past, and intensify these efforts. We have shared our mission and goals with you on the [church website](#).

Over the next year and more we will be offering opportunities for learning and actions that you can take as households, and we will work with the trustees to examine and take action on ways that the church itself can reduce its carbon footprint. We will update you quarterly on our work together. If care for creation is something for which you have a passion, please consider joining the taskforce. You may contact Terry Starr at rstarr9982@aol.com to indicate your interest.

Let us covenant with one another to seize this moment and commit ourselves to this *Kairos Call to Action*, as a congregations as households, and as individuals; joining in the healing of our sacred earthly home.

—Beth Moore, Creation Justice Task Force

We, as the church, have the opportunity to assert that we are fully committed to our first calling as caretakers of God's creation.

Note: I am indebted to the UCC's national website and a speech by Rev. John Helt at the Wisconsin UCC's annual conference gathering in June 2020 for much of this content.

Looking Ahead

Watch for information in the upcoming Orders of Worship about:

- **Christmas Eve at the Labyrinth, Thursday, Dec. 24, 4:00-6:00 p.m.**
- **Christmas Eve Worship Service available Thursday, Dec. 24 at thepalms.org**
- **Our Shower Trailer Dedication, Sunday, Dec. 27, at 11:30 a.m.**

I-HELP Needs Overnight Volunteer Monitors

Are you a night owl or a morning dove? Here is an Interfaith Homeless Emergency Lodging Program (I-HELP) late-night or early-morning volunteer opportunity for you: I-HELP needs overnight monitors.

Volunteer time-slots are 10:00 p.m.-3:00 a.m. or 3:00-7:00 am. The I-HELP guests are usually weary and sleep soundly during these hours. Usually, there are 12 guests. There are 2 monitors for each shift.

Worried about COVID? We are limited to 7 guests during this time. All I-HELP participants have tested negative for COVID to enter the 90-day program, are retested when needed, and they are temperature screened when they enter COTP. There is almost no interaction with the guests between 10:00 p.m. and 6:30 a.m.

You must obtain a State of Arizona Level One Fingerprint Clearance card, which requires a bit of paperwork. Registration is easy, and the \$65 cost will be paid by COTP. I-HELP has just celebrated its first year. Over 25 people have found housing. You can help make a difference in the lives of others in Year 2. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Nancy Mueller at 608.838.3575 or Vickie Ashenbrenner at 831.233.2548.

The Gift Card program, **Scrip**, is alive and well. If you need to place an order, please email Doug Hughes at dhphx83@yahoo.com.

You will need to drop payment off at the church office and specify it's for gift cards. You can also submit payment electronically and place a memo that the funds are intended for gift cards.



December 1-14, 2020

1 Tuesday	10:30 am (B2L) Current Issues & Faith: "J.E.S.U.S.A." 4:00 pm (B2L) Jump Start	2 Wednesday	9:00 am (B2B) Personnel Committee 10:00 am (B2B) Board of Evangelism & Growth 11:00 am (B2L) Spiritual Growth: "Reshaping Religious Imagination for Humanity" 4:00 pm (KH) I-Help
3 Thursday	10:00 am (B2L) Cosmic Christians 1:00 pm (B2B) WISE Steering Committee	4 Friday	
5 Saturday		6 Sunday	8:30 am (B2L) Conversations with Debby Stinton 9:00 am (SA) Open prayer 11:00 am (BR) Holy Grounds Coffee with Pastor Paul JOIN US ONLINE AT
7 Monday	4:00 pm (KH) I-Help	8 Tuesday	8:30 am (B2L) Breakfast in your PJs 10:30 am (B2L) Current Issues & Faith: "J.E.S.U.S.A." 4:00 pm (B2L) Jump Start
9 Wednesday	8:30 am (KH) Shower Trailer Ministry 10:30 am (B2L) "The Divine Feminine: Its Place in Our Lives" and "God, Women and the World: A New Way To Tell The Story" 1:00 pm (BR) Service Project Craft Group 2:30 pm (B2B) Constitution & Bylaws Taskforce	10 Thursday	10:00 am (B2L) Cosmic Christians
11 Friday	9:00 am (B2B) Social Justice Action Team 4:00 pm (KH) I-Help	12 Saturday	
13 Sunday	8:30 am (B2L) Conversations with Debby Stinton 9:00 am (SA) Open prayer 11:00 am (BR) Holy Grounds Coffee with Pastor Paul JOIN US ONLINE AT	14 Monday	4:00 pm (KH) I-Help

SA=Sanctuary, KH=King Hall, BR=Bridges, B2L=Bridges to Learning (online class), B2B=Bridges to Boards (online meeting)

December 15-31, 2020

15 Tuesday Palm Leaf Deadline	10:30 am (B2L) Current Issues & Faith: "J.E.S.U.S.A" 4:00 pm (B2L) Jump Start	16 Wednesday	9:00 am (B2B) Board of Mission and Outreach 10:30 am (B2L) "The Divine Feminine: Its Place in Our Lives" and "God, Women and the World: A New Way To Tell The Story"
17 Thursday	10:00 am (B2L) Cosmic Christians	18 Friday	
19 Saturday	9:00 am (B2B) Council Meeting	20 Sunday	8:30 am (B2L) Conversations with Debby Stinton 9:00 am (SA) Open prayer 11:00 am (BR) Holy Grounds Coffee with Pastor Paul JOIN US ONLINE AT
21 Monday	4:00 pm (KH) I-Help	22 Tuesday	10:30 am (B2L) Current Issues & Faith: "J.E.S.U.S.A" 4:00 pm (B2L) Jump Start
23 Wednesday	10:30 am (B2L) "The Divine Feminine: Its Place in Our Lives" and "God, Women and the World: A New Way To Tell The Story" 1:00 pm (BR) Service Project Craft Group	24 Thursday	10:00 am (B2L) Cosmic Christians 4:00-6:00 pm (LB) Christmas Eve at the Labyrinth
25 Friday	4:00 pm (KH) I-Help	26 Saturday	
27 Sunday	8:30 am (B2L) Conversations with Debby Stinton 9:00 am (SA) Open prayer 11:30 am (PL) Shower Trailer Dedication JOIN US ONLINE AT https://thepalms.org/online-worship-services/	28 Monday	4:00 pm (KH) I-Help
29 Tuesday	10:30 am (B2L) Current Issues & Faith: "J.E.S.U.S.A" 4:00 pm (B2L) Jump Start	30 Wednesday	10:30 am (B2L) "The Divine Feminine: Its Place in Our Lives" and "God, Women and the World: A New Way To Tell The Story"
31 Thursday	10:00 am (B2L) Cosmic Christians		