



Congregation for Mental Wellness

Welcoming | Inclusive
Supportive | Engaged

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!

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S is for Shining Forth

"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 ten thousands of saints...." —Deuteronomy 33:2

"Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined forth."—Psalm 50:2

"Because it is the God who spoke that out of obscurity, light should shine who has shone in our hearts for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." —2 Corinthians 4:6

"But when the kindness of God our Savior and his love toward men shined forth..." —Titus 3:4

Stop and think, the stars never go out! Even in daylight, the stars are visible somewhere on this planet. And if you are in an observatory, you can see the stars and their formations in the daytime. Shining forth never stops with nature, and God has never stopped shining forth hope, love and comfort. God's promise: My light will never go out! My light can always be found! Even in the most depressing and discouraging of times, if we pause, God's light can be seen.

If we really understand what the Christmas message is, then one of the best examples of God's shining forth leads to Jesus, who is the liberator to the people who live marginalized in oppression and poverty, and they are waiting for us. "He (Jesus) came as a witness to testify to the light." —John1:17

If we believe that one of God's promises is "shining forth" light, then we are called to respond to this powerful poem, Blessed Are You Who Bear the Light, by Jan Richardson in Night Vision: Searching the Shadows of Advent and Christmas.

*Blessed are you
who bear the light
in unbearable times,
who testify
to its endurance
amidst the unendurable,
who bear witness
to its persistence
when everything seems
in shadow
and grief.*

*Blessed are you,
in whom
the light lives,
in whom
the brightness blazes---
your heart
a chapel,
an altar where
in the deepest night
can be seen
the fire that
shines forth in you
in unaccountable faith,
in stubborn hope,
in love that illumines
every broken thing
it finds.*