



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!

S is for Steadfast: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want," Psalms 123:1; "I will never leave you," Hebrews 13:5; "God will carry us," Isaiah 43:3,4.

Relentless. We talk about our current experience with this pandemic and our limited capacity to explore our world at will. "This is relentless," I heard a woman say. Then it dawned on me: God is relentless. God doesn't give up!

God is unflappable, faithful. Many people of no particular formal religious affiliation sing and respond deeply to the words of the song: "Great is Thy Faithfulness." What intense love that is for us. What a trusting love that is for us that God is not an intervening, "fix it" God, but is always there, always available.

"Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see; all I have needed thy hand hath provided — Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!" (T.O. Grisham/W.M. Runyan, 1923)

I am reminded of the times when I worked with severely depressed and sometimes suicidal clients. They were weary; couldn't see light at the end of the tunnel; didn't believe they could continue this hard journey of therapy. My statement to them: "I will never be the one to give up hope for you. I will carry hope for you when you can't." Several times over the years, clients have returned, wrote a letter, made a phone call to let me know that phrase pulled them through.

God holds our hope when we can't. God is steadfast, relentless, and faithful.

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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 free, LED tealights for each household in the church office. They are the gift of Life Long Learning Board and the Care Team of the Church of the Palms.