



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

I have literally been waiting for this moment for a year! It broke my heart to have to go from in-person worship to video; I know you join me in missing our in-person gatherings. I truly believe that I will never, ever, take for granted the blessing of being able to gather in our sanctuary! The good news is that we are almost at the end of our extended stay of being locked in the tomb. The stone is rolling away this Easter!



I am so excited to be able to gather for in-person worship on Easter Sunday. We will gather for worship outside on the patio by the fountain for a 9 a.m. worship, which will be less than 45 minutes in length.

We'll gather, but we still do need to observe some protocols. Mask up. Please refrain from hugging, etc. The church is also a "No Judgment Zone." That is, we respect the decisions that individuals will be making for their own safety. Some may, for example, need to stay home for a while longer. We want people to make up their own minds on what best fits their health and safety needs – and then feel good about that decision. Whenever you make it back, I hope you can rejoice with me!

Check out these other Holy Week Worship Opportunities:

Maundy Thursday, April 1 on our Bridges platform on the webpage. Our sister congregations of Desert Garden UCC, Sun City Christian DOC, and United Church UCC will be joining us. It will be available starting at noon and be up for your watching anytime on Thursday.

Good Friday, April 2 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Labyrinth Walk. Outside at our labyrinths.

Easter Sunday, April 4 at 9 a.m. In-person worship at the fountain patio. Call by April 1st for reservations at 623.748.3574. or click on [this link](#).

What will the Sundays after Easter look like? I don't know exactly. But I am glad to be journeying with you. See you soon!

Shalom, Paul

Update from the MOD(erator) Squad

Dear Anonymous Donor,

We want to thank you on behalf of our church family for your generous donation of \$50,000 to help us place solar panels on our church roof and thus reduce our oil and coal-based energy consumption. We know the use of a renewable energy, like sun power, will help stop the deterioration of our planet's fragile atmosphere, slow down global warming, and help people around the globe and future generations enjoy God's creation. We are thankful that your anonymous donation made it possible and even encouraged those of us, perhaps less



The Moderator Team (from left): Suzanne Boisclair, John Durbin, and Jerry Lovell.

financially blessed at this time in our lives, to also contribute to this important cause. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts and the depths of our soles for secretly but boldly demonstrating your love of one of our church's three great loves: Love of creation, Love of neighbor, and Love of children.

But why did you do this anonymously? Were you inspired by our church's mission to **share** God's unconditional love, justice and extravagant welcome? Was it because this kind of generosity is in the Church of the Palms' DNA and inspires us to **share** our time, talent and treasure so enthusiastically? Could it be the admonition of Matthew 6:4, "so that your **sharing** may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." Or was it just your love of God and this church family?

Whatever the reason, we want to tell you how much we appreciate your gift to our church. It is a striking reminder of all the **sharing** that goes on here in this community called Church of the Palms; **sharing** smiles, hugs (even virtual ones), moments of sadness and joy, sending cards, Care Team visits, making quick phone calls, helping one another getting Covid shots, and on and on. You inspire us because we see God in this silent act of generosity, and it helps others see God in all of us. God bless you!

—Jerry, Suzanne, John

WORSHIP THEMES FOR APRIL

Easter Morning, April 4: In-person worship around our fountain; Pastor Paul will be preaching. The Resurrection sends us out into the streets. Read John 20:1-18.

April 11: Pastor Jim will preach from John 20:19-31. A locked door is no match for an empty tomb.

April 18: Our Creation Justice Task Force will be leading worship; Rev. Doug Bland of Arizona Interfaith Power and Light preaching. Doug is a gifted storyteller — you won't want to miss his message!

April 25: Pastor Paul will be preaching. Read Acts 4:5-12. How do you define salvation? Is it for all or just some?

IN-PERSON WORSHIP RESUMES

The Church of the Palms is returning to in-person worship beginning Easter Sunday at 9:00 a.m. This is an outdoor service near the fountain on our patio. [Click here for details and how to RSVP.](#) Regular Worship resumes at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, April 11, and each Sunday thereafter. We will continue to meet outdoors through April. Reservations are necessary.

Happy Birthday!

Diane Santos	4/4	Wendy Whitlock	4/20
Margaret Carpenter	4/7	Chris Jensen	4/23
Joe Comito	4/7	David Princehouse	4/25
Nancy Mahaffey	4/7	Bob Carlson	4/27
Bob Urquhart	4/9	Viola Hustedt	4/28
Pastor Paul Whitlock	4/9	Deborah Lane	4/30
Rod Fensom	4/10	Andre Petty	4/30
Bill Reeves	4/10	James Yang-Hellewell	4/30
Lurene Ladd	4/12		
Jeffrey Scruggs	4/12		
Jan Alexander	4/14		
Bernice Fintelmann	4/15		
Tom Coffey	4/17		
Jan Hutchins	4/18		





WISE
 Congregation for Mental Wellness
 Welcoming Supportive | Inclusive Engaged

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
<https://thepalms.org/Tools2Thrive>

CARE TEAM HAPPENINGS

You have heard it said that all members of The Palms are members of the Care Team. It is so true! Each of us are called by God to demonstrate love and help our neighbors in need when we can, as often as we can. There is a group of people who have been drawn to the Care Team and Homebound ministry as their way of giving of their time and talent. We are grateful for each of them and how they minister to us! Maybe God is calling you to this specific ministry for this specific time and space. If so, please contact Pastor Jim at jim.alexander@thepalms.org or call him at 623.792.5295. He would love to help you discover the opportunities of service that are available. We're always looking for more folks to be the hands and feet of Jesus on the Care Team.

Spiritual Connections Offered by WISE

Beginning Monday, April 12, we will be offering "Spiritual Connections" at 1:00 p.m. This is a recovery group which will seek to offer a safe space for support of people who are suffering from addictions, abuse, or other traumatic events through a variety of techniques based on Spiritual Principles. Gordon Street, Commissioned Minister from First Phoenix UCC, will be facilitating.



Gordon Street

We will also be offering a Spiritual Connections session on Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. for those in our community who are still working and would like to have opportunity to attend this type of support group. Both groups will connect on our Bridges to Learning through the church website. If you are interested in attending, please email or call Pastor Jim to confirm.



Congratulations to Shea Darian! She unanimously passed her ordination interview with the Southwest Conference (SWC) Committee on Church and Ministry. Wahoo!

The next step is her Ecclesiastical Council. It will be online Sunday, May 2, at 3:00 p.m. That group is composed of representatives of congregations from across the SWC. You are welcome to join that group – info on how to do that is forthcoming. Shea will present her ordination paper and defend it at the Ecclesiastical Council. After the quiz time, it will be their time to affirm Shea. Once that happens and she gets a job, she can be ordained. Shea is a gifted person and has blessed this congregation in more ways than we can count. We hope you can join us online to celebrate her ministry Sunday, May 2, at 3:00 p.m. —Pastor Paul

Fundraising Update from the Board of Stewards

By Sandy Krueger

Board of Stewards

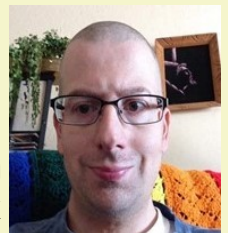
Have you heard about our Gift Card Program? Scrip is a wonderful way to purchase gift cards for family, friends (and yourself!) while supporting The Church of the Palms. When you purchase gift cards through Scrip, The Palms receives a kickback percentage from the sales once the cards are used. And there is a huge selection of gift cards to choose from.



Here's how to participate in our Scrip Gift Card Program:

1. Choose your gift cards by retailer and denomination. [Click here](#) for a full list.
2. Fill out a Scrip Order Form. A printable version will soon be on our website at thepalms.org. Meanwhile, order forms are available in the church office.
3. Please make checks payable to Church of the Palms, and make sure to write Gift Cards in the memo line.
4. Deliver the Order Form and your payment to the church by the first Sunday of the month. Leave your order form and payment in the "Scrip" cubby in the church office.
5. Gift Card Orders will be placed that week and delivered by the third Sunday of the month.

A special thank you to Doug Hughes, who most recently ran our Gift Card Program. You may have seen Doug at a table greeting you as you made a gift-card purchase when we last met in person for worship. Scott Patrick will now be taking care of your orders. Welcome, Scott!



Scott Patrick

Scrip Order Form

Name of Scrip	\$ Value	Quantity	Subtotal
GRAND TOTAL:			\$

Name: _____ Phone #: _____ Payment Type: Check or Cash

KNOW YOUR **POWER** SOURCE

By Beth Moore

Creation Justice Team

Well, yes, I'm talking about APS, but I'm writing about something more than that. Those of you who have been reading the Palm Leaf and receiving recent communications from the church know that we at COTP are taking some aggressive steps to lower the carbon footprint of our church - that is the amount of CO2 emissions we put in to the atmosphere. We are doing this by moving ahead to install solar panels that will reduce our CO2 emissions from electricity by approximately 50 percent. This has been one of the major projects in the last year of our Creation Justice Task Force, in cooperation with the Board of Trustees, and has been made possible (along with your gifts) by a generous matching grant of \$50,000 from an anonymous donor.

So, why is this work part of the Church's calling? It goes beyond a desire to save money, and is rooted in our mission that includes the Love of Creation: all of God's creation. In a worship service on the first Sunday of Lent, I heard the Genesis story with new ears.

"This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: ¹³I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, ¹⁵I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind.

Do you notice that God's covenant is not only with human beings, but with the Earth, all creatures and generations to come? God promised that never again will God bring destruction upon the Earth. But what about us? In some ways we have become like gods. We now shape, at least to a degree, the very climate of our planet, and our consumer culture demands the lions share of earth's dwindling resources. Do *we* remember that the covenant called us as *partners* with God in creation? Is it not part of our calling to see that the earth, the land, the rivers are not destroyed during our lifetime, and that they are preserved for all generations?

Our young people are reminding us of this "Fierce Urgency of Now." Consider Greta Thunberg's (18 year old climate activist from Sweden) work of the past several years in speaking truth to power about our climate realities. Our Indigenous brothers and sisters have operated from the "7th generation" principle, which says that in every decision, be it personal, governmental or corporate, we must consider how it will affect our descendants **seven generations** into the future.

And what is our **power source** as Christians? Is not "love" that source? That love of God is manifest in our love of Neighbor, Creation and Children. This action of loving creation **is** to love our children, and our neighbors.

Join us on April 18th for worship, either online or in person, as we celebrate the beginning of Earth Week. Rev. Doug Bland, UCC pastor and Executive Director of Arizona Interfaith Power and Light will be our guest preacher.

* I am indebted in some of my thinking to the sermon of Pastor Kent Cormack, of First Congregational Church in La Crosse, WI preached on the first Sunday in Lent, 2021.

Prison Ministry Introduces Pen Pal Program

By Nancy Nonini

Social Justice Action Team-Prison Ministry

*Do you know why 4:15 p.m. is the most exciting time of day at Perryville Prison for Women? (ASPC – Perryville) It's Mail Call. Women rush to see if they get a letter. Others never come out because they don't want to face yet another day without a letter. A letter in prison is an "envelope of hope," according to Sue Ellen Allen in her book, *The Slumber Party from Hell*.*

Women who have pen pals are less likely to go back to prison after re-entering society. Matthew 25 Prison Ministry (originated through Red Mountain United Methodist Church in Mesa) has provided pen pals for 264 inmates at Perryville; 128 have become "returning citizens" and only four have returned to prison, giving Matthew 25 a return rate of 3.1%, as opposed to the national recidivism rate of over 50%.

Since our Arouet Foundation Storytellers Breakfast in Your PJs, we have filled 5 Starter Kits for women being released from Perryville, and at least 2 people have expressed interest in becoming pen pals. Luckily for us, Matthew 25 Prison Ministry will provide a Zoom Pen Pal training on Friday, April 9 at 10:00 a.m. You can access this presentation on Bridges (church's website) under Social Justice Action Team/Prison Ministry. This event will be recorded if you want to view it but are not available at the scheduled time. Please email Nancy Nonini at nnonini19@gmail.com with any questions or for a Zoom invitation.

Continuing our Journey with the Nassar family and their work at the Tent of Nations

By Beth Moore

Gather with us at 9:00 a.m. on May 7th "[on the Bridge](#)" as we reconnect with Daoud Nassar, Palestinian Christian farmer. Daoud and his family farm their ancestral lands — a 100-acre hilltop site situated between Bethlehem and Hebron in the West Bank — and there began the Tent of Nations, an international peace center. Their non-violent resistance to the attempts of the Israeli military to take their land, and the decision to live from their faith stance of "refusing to be enemies" is inspiring.

For those who are new to the Tent of Nations, there will be a brief overview of the work. Daoud will also bring an update to us regarding the escalating pressures they are facing under COVID and the increasing physical attacks on their farm and its facilities. If you are not familiar with the Tent of Nations, please learn more here: <http://www.tentofnations.org/>. Questions can be directed to Beth Moore, COTP member, at ebmoore1@live.com.





10 Misconceptions about Homelessness

1. Most unhoused persons are mentally ill. **FALSE**

Decades of epidemiological research reveals that one-third, at most, have a serious mental illness. De-institutionalization or closure of mental hospitals was initially believed to be a prime cause of homelessness, but this occurred well before the sharp increase in the 1980s.

2. The majority abuse drugs and alcohol. **FALSE**

It is believed that only about 20 to 40 percent of homeless have a substance abuse issue. In fact, abuse is rarely the sole cause of homelessness and more often is a response to it because living on the street puts the person in frequent contact with users and dealers.

3. They're dangerous and violent. **FALSE**

Homeless persons are far more likely to be the victims of violence than the perpetrators. Of course, some homeless individuals may commit acts of violence beyond self-defense but such acts rarely affect the non-homeless individuals they encounter. To put it another way, any violence by homeless persons is either self-defense or due to the rare violent perpetrator who preys on other homeless people. Non-homeless need to understand this.

4. They're criminals. **FALSE**

Homeless persons are more likely to have criminal justice intervention. However, this is primarily because many of their daily survival activities are criminalized—meaning they might be given a summons or arrested for minor offenses such as trespassing, littering, or loitering.

5. “Bad choices” led to their homelessness. **FALSE**

Everyone makes mistakes, but the descent into homelessness is not necessarily the direct result of “choices.” Far more often, a sudden illness or an accident, losing one’s job, or falling into debt leads to eviction — or doubling up with family or friends becomes untenable.

6. They prefer the freedom of life on the street. **FALSE**

There is no evidence to support this notion that homeless persons are “service resistant.” Since “Housing First” began in New York City in 1992 at the nonprofit Pathways to Housing, Inc., it became clear that the offer of immediate access to independent housing with support services is welcomed and accepted by most homeless. People on the street often reject the option of crowded, unsafe shelters — not housing in general.

7. They spend all their money on drugs and alcohol. FALSE

Interviews with street homeless persons show that most of their money goes to buying food and amenities such as socks, hygiene products, and bottled water. Although some do spend money on alcohol or drugs, the same can be said of anyone.

8. They just need to get a job. FALSE

A significant portion of homeless people do have jobs—they just cannot afford to pay rent. Some receive disability income due to physical or mental problems but still cannot afford rent. For those wanting to work—a common refrain among those interviewed by my research team—the complications of applying for a job with no address, no clean clothes, no place to shower, and the stigma of being homeless (or having a criminal record), make such individuals far less competitive in the low-wage job market.

9. The homeless are not part of “our community.” FALSE

Surveys have shown 70- to 80-percent of homeless persons are from the local area or lived there for a year or longer before becoming unhoused.

10. They don't care if they live in unsanitary conditions. FALSE

Living outdoors means having no regular place for bodily functions, to dispose of trash, to store food safely, or to bathe. A homeless person who “cares” has few alternatives. Our research shows that lacking access to a shower is one of the more humiliating aspects of being homeless.

SOURCE: NYU News interview with Deborah K. Padgett, a leading scholar on homelessness. Taken from The 12 Biggest Myths about Homelessness in America (NYU.edu).

*THANK YOU to COTP member and Social Justice volunteer Nancy Mueller for submitting this article.

Dispatches from ‘FEET-N-MORE’ Shower Ministry

By Max Klinkenborg

Shower Trailer Ministry

The shower trailer of “FEET-N-MORE” of Church of the Palms has been in the city of Surprise on 2/23 and 3/9, providing hot showers for the homeless. On our first outing, we provided 9 showers, and it grew to 12 our second time. In addition to the showers, we are giving guests a bag of toiletries and a hand towel. We are also providing a charging station for cell phones, tablets, etc. Each time, we have had 8 volunteers who are friends or members of COTP.

We are hosted by the Salvation Army Church on Avenue of the Arts in Surprise. They provide lunches for our volunteers and guests in addition to offering clean clothes. We will be at this location on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month in 2021, sponsored by the City of Surprise.

Joining us each time has been Circle the City, providing a portable doctor's office. On the fourth Tuesday of each month, we will be joined by Chance Shelter, which provides pet care. The City of Surprise is present, offering the services of the city to the homeless, including a city police officer dedicated to serving the homeless population. The Phoenix Rescue Mission is also present, as well as Lutheran Social Services.

If you are interested in volunteering with the shower trailer, contact John Durbin at 623.693.8866 or Max Klinkenborg at 816.377.4618.

Lifelong Learning in April

LLL classes continue [online](#).



- **Shared Conversations**, Sundays, 8:30-9:30 a.m. Facilitated by Bobbie Chapman. Use Bridges on the church's [website](#) to join the group.
- **Current Issues & Faith**, Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. "Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents" DVD series with Isabel Wilkerson. Caste invites us to discover the inner workings of an American hierarchy that goes far beyond the confines of race, class, or gender. Isabel is an American journalist and the author of "The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration." She was the first woman of African-American heritage to win the Pulitzer Prize in journalism. Facilitated by Kay Klinkenberg.

Sequential Current Issues and Faith classes facilitated by Kay Klinkenberg:

—"The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration" is a historical study by Isabel Wilkerson and National Book Critics Circle Award winner.

—"White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism," by Dr. Robin DiAngelo, professor at University of Washington. DVD series explaining the phenomenon and discusses how white people can develop capacity to constructively engage across race.

—"Hidden Bias of Good People," hosted by Dr. Bryant Marks of Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia.

- **Jump Start**, Tuesdays, 4:00-5:00 p.m. Prep for Sunday Sermon with Scripture/Discussion. Facilitated by John Durbin.
- **Spiritual Growth**, Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. "The Universal Christ: How a Forgotten Reality Can Change Everything We See, Hope for and Believe" DVD series with Fr. Richard Rohr. Drawing on scripture, history, and spiritual practice, Rohr shares a transformative view of Jesus Christ as a portrait of God's constant unfolding work in the world. "Jesus' life was meant to declare that humanity has never been separate from God—except by its own negative choice." Facilitated by Kay Klinkenberg.
- **Cosmic Christians**, Thursdays*, 10:00-11:30 a.m. Discussion of the book "Dancing in God's Earthquake: The Coming Transformation of Religion," by Rabbi Arthur Ocean Waskow. Dancing is a metaphor for how we deal with change (earthquake) and religious understanding. The relationship between theology and ecology and the universality of all life dominates. Facilitated by Linette Stenberg.
*NOTE: Class will meet on April 1, Maundy Thursday.

How to Participate in Lifelong Learning

All classes/events remain virtual through ZOOM on the church's website: www.thepalms.org; look to left, click on "Bridges"; scan down and look for the date of the event; click on the class to join.

April 1-16, 2021

1 Thursday	10:00 am (B2L) Cosmic Christians 12:00 pm (BR) Maundy Thursday Worship	2 Friday	1:00-3:00 pm (LR) Labyrinth Walk
3 Saturday		4 Sunday Gift Card Orders Due	9:00 am (PT) Easter Worship
5 Monday	1:00 pm (B2B) I-HELP Volunteers 4:00 pm (KH) I-Help	6 Tuesday	8:30 am (BR) Shower Trailer Committee 10:30 am (B2L) Current Issues & Faith 4:00 pm (B2L) Jump Start
7 Wednesday	10:00 am (B2B) Board of Evangelism & Growth 11:00 am (B2L) Spiritual Growth	8 Thursday	10:00 am (B2L) Cosmic Christians
9 Friday	10:00 am (B2B) SJAT – Prison Ministry 1:30 pm (B2B) Social Justice Action Team	10 Saturday	
11 Sunday	8:30 am (B2L) Shared Conversations 10:00 am (PT) Sunday Worship	12 Monday	2:00 pm (B2B) Board of Trustees 4:00 pm (KH) I-Help
13 Tuesday	10:30 am (B2L) Current Issues and Faith 12:00 pm (BR) Board of Finance & Investment 4:00 pm (B2L) Jump Start	14 Wednesday	10:30 am (B2L) Spiritual Growth 1:00 pm (BR) Service Project Craft Group
15 Thursday Palm Leaf Deadline	10:00 am (B2L) Cosmic Christians 1:00 pm (B2B) Care Team	16 Friday	

SA=Sanctuary, KH=King Hall, BR=Bridges (www.thepalms.org/bridges), B2L=Bridges to Learning, B2B=Bridges to Boards,
LR=Labyrinth, PT=Patio, BR=Board Room

April 17-30, 2021

17 Saturday	9:00 am (B2B) Church Council	18 Sunday	8:30 am (B2L) Shared Conversations 10:00 am (PT) Sunday Worship
19 Monday	4:00 pm (KH) I-Help	20 Tuesday	8:30 am (BR) Shower Trailer Committee 9:00 am (B2B) Creation Justice Team 10:30 am (B2L) Current Issues & Faith 4:00 pm (B2L) Jump Start
21 Wednesday	9:00 am (B2B) Board of Mission and Outreach 10:30 am (B2L) Spiritual Growth 2:30 pm (B2B) Constitution & Bylaws Committee	22 Thursday	10:00 am (B2L) Cosmic Christians
23 Friday		24 Saturday	
25 Sunday	8:30 am (B2L) Shared Conversations 10:00 am (PT) Sunday Worship	26 Monday	4:00 pm (KH) I-Help
27 Tuesday	10:30 am (B2L) Current Issues & Faith 4:00 pm (B2L) Jump Start	28 Wednesday	10:30 am (B2L) Spiritual Growth 1:00 pm (BR) Service Project Craft Group
29 Thursday	9:30 am (BR) MOD Squad 10:00 am (B2L) Cosmic Christians	30 Friday	

KH=King Hall, BR=Bridges, B2L= Bridges to Learning, B2B=Bridges to Boards, PT=Patio, BR=Board Room