Congregation for Mental Wellness
Welcoming | Inclusive
Supportive | 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

How To Thrive During the Holidays

Thanksgiving is past and now we prepare for Advent and Christmas. Rather than just surviving the holidays, here are some ways we can thrive during the holidays. Many of us experience anxiety and grief due to several factors. The holiday season can magnify the emotions that accompany anxiety and grief. When you are feeling these heightened emotions, try any combination of the following:

- Devise an intentional plan: rather than trying to forget about the holidays in hope that they will just disappear, write a contract with yourself that spells out what and how much you will do.
    - This year, you may not be up to attending all the activities to which you're invited. Pick the one or two that are the most important to you.
    - You don't have to put out every decoration in your collection. Choose the ones that are the most meaningful or that elicit feelings of positivity. Use items from nature to decorate and focus on the holy in the holiday.
    - When it comes to gift-giving, spend time with those you enjoy being around rather than spending time at the mall or on-line trying to find that perfect gift. Enjoy an experiential activity and conversation.
    - Try as we might, we can't duplicate past holidays. Try doing something completely different. What way could you honor your loved one(s) who are no longer with you? What traditions could you do a little differently that help you focus on the true meaning of Advent and Christmas?
    - If you choose to be alone, it is a good idea to plan some activities that help you to acknowledge your feelings of depression, anxiety, or anger. Write them down and include some ideas on how you might relieve their place in your life. Avoid the temptation to numb the pain with excessive alcohol, food, or drug consumption. Remember, you are never truly alone. Any of the helplines listed above are always available for your use. There are also many rich resources on our Tools2Thrive page of the website which may help you.
    - When the memories of holidays past come flooding in, cherish them. Write them down and design ways to preserve them: make a scrapbook, collage, or journal.
    - Attend the Blue Christmas Service at The Palms on Tuesday, December 21st at 3:00 p.m. We will journey together to thrive during the holidays.