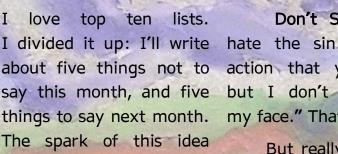




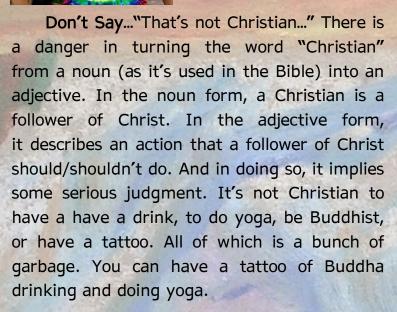
THE PALM LEAF

The Church of the Palms, UCC 14808 North Boswell Boulevard, Sun City, Arizona

A LETTER FROM PAUL



came from Tim Brown.



The reality is that we just end up calling the person doing that action "unchristian" to hurtful consequences. For those questioning their faith, it further narrowly defines who is in or out with God. If we want Jesus to be present with us, let's drop the judgment, we should ban "Christian" in the adjective form.

JULY 2024

Don't Say... "I love the sinner but I hate the sin.." Rather, name the specific action that you hate. "I love you, Fred, but I don't like it when you scream in my face." That's a fair statement.

But really, that's not how that phrase is used. I've only heard the phrase "I love the sinner but hate the sin" used when people are talking about someone's sexual identity. "I love LGBTQ+ people, I just hate that they act on their feelings." Even if it's not the whole of my definition, sexuality is part of what makes me who I am. So, if you were to say to me, "I love you, Paul but I hate that you act on your heterosexuality..." If you said that to me, I would stop listening right then and there because, well, I wouldn't believe that you truly loved me.

Don't Say... "Surround yourself with only good Christians." And while that may sound good at first, I have a problem with this sort of thinking, because, when you live in a bubble all you breathe is soapy air, and you may begin to think that is all there is. We need diversity because it is only in diversity where our thoughts, beliefs, and ideas are challenged and grow. M. Scott Peck wrote: "Share similarities—celebrate differences."

A LETTER FROM PAUL CONTINUED...

It is narrow to believe that somehow surrounding yourself with only one worldview will help you see the world better. And besides, history tells us sometimes Christians surrounded people and then burned them on the stake.

Don't Say... "You just have to do God's will..." I am utterly suspicious of people who claim to know the specifics of God's will. I'm even more suspicious of people who claim that God's greatest wish is to have us be in a relationship with God.

In the abstract, I get the statement. But, like a three-legged stool, it is only solid and steady if it works together with two other areas. God desires us to live in Shalom with God, but also with one another and with all of creation. To claim that one takes precedence the others is, I think, short-sighted.

And Don't Say... "It's all in God's plan..."

I know we're all tempted to say it, you are,
I am. And let's admit that we've said it.

If we say it for one instance, we've got to say
it for all. We can't pick and choose when
it is convenient, or the situations fit our
religious / political view. Can you look
someone in the eye and say, "It's all in God's
plan... when their baby dies; when their sister
is murdered; they get cancer? Can you say it
to a friend when their life is in shambles?
I really can't think of a worse thing to say
than "It's all in God's plan." If we want Jesus
in the situation, in the hard times of people's
lives, don't say it.

We cannot use God to fill in the gaps between events and the people they effect. We want to give solace, to promise that there is a purpose behind madness, to give hope to the hurting. But if there is one thing that the cross shows us definitively, it's that God doesn't stop the pain... but makes a way for resurrection.

So, when you're confronted with the news of your friend's tragedy, stand in solidarity with them and scream at God if you have to with them. But using God's name in vain and blaming the situation on God's will, won't bring Jesus. We just shouldn't say things to hurting people to make us feel better.

Next month, we'll get to things you and I should say to bring Jesus into the situation. Until then:

- 5. Don't use Christian as an adjective (that is be judgy) we're not the judge;
- 4. **Don't** be disingenuous hiding behind what you like or dislike own your feelings
- 3. Don't live in a bubble diversity is a good thing
- 2. Don't claim to know specifics of God's will
- 1. And the number one thing not to say or do, don't blame God or God's will when things happen.

Shalom, Paul



Notes from your Executive Board

at The Church of the Palms

By Rev. Dave Klingensmith, Ministry Council Chair

The Church of the Palms Ministry Council is not meeting during July or August. But that doesn't mean that things are not happening at The Church of the Palms. You may wonder, "What does the Ministry Council do, anyway?" So here is some information about the Council and its work.

The Ministry Council is made up of the excellent Chairs of our Ministry Teams: Pastor Jim – Worship; Suzanne Boisclair – Mission & Outreach; Martin Meadows – Life Long Learning; Eona Schulz – Evangelism & Growth; Terry Starr – Fellowship; and John Durbin – Volunteer Engagement. Each month they report on what their Ministry Teams are doing, bring up issues that may involve other Ministry Teams or issues that need approval from the Executive Board.

Worship Ministry Team oversees Deacons, Ushers, Flowers, all things related to our Sunday worship services and special Worship Services, and the Bus Ministry, among other things.

Mission & Outreach Ministry Team oversees all of our participation and financial contributions to community organizations like Dysart Community Center and Hart Pantry, and mission projects near and far, including the work of our Social Justice Leadership Team, Prison Ministry, LGBTQ+ Ministry, Palestinian Ministry, I-Help and the Shower Trailer Ministry, just to name a few.

Life Long Learning Ministry Team organizes

and coordinates all the wonderful learning opportunities we offer each year, everything from Contemplative Prayer to book studies like "The Man in the Dog Park" to classes on Christian Nationalism and the "Living the Questions" series which explores progressive Christianity.

Evangelism & Growth Ministry Team spots our visitors each Sunday, provides them with information regarding our congregation, follows up with them and invites them to New Member Orientation gatherings. Because of their work we received 55 new members in 2023. They also follow up with those folks to help them get integrated into the congregation.

Fellowship Ministry Team coordinates our after-worship Fellowship hours. They also provide meals or refreshments after Memorial Services or other special services. Our Beehive groups that help us get to know others also fall under their purview.

The Volunteer Engagement Committee is responsible for seeking people to be part of these ministries, to fill vacancies on Ministry Teams and Boards, so that we can fulfill our mission of Love, Justice and Extravagant Welcome.

All Ministry Council meetings and Ministry Team meetings are open to everyone. If you think you might like to be part of any of our ministries, feel free to attend a meeting to see if it's right for you. Together we can do great things!

JULY's Worship Sunday themes:

July 7th:

Pastor Paul will be preaching.
Read Mark 6:7-10, 13.
Jesus sent the disciples out in
his name asking them to limit their carry-on
baggage. What kind of (emotional) baggage
do we try to bring along on journeys?
It's time to lose our baggage!

July 14th:

Rev. Mark Makowski will be our guest preacher. Read Amos 7:7-15. Justice is in the heart of Amos; is it in our hearts?

July 21st:

Pastor Jim will be preaching from Ephesians 2:11-22. We are joined together to make one holy temple.

July 28th:

Pastor Paul will be back in the pulpit.

He will talk about his days as an Olympian forty years ago. What medal did he get?

Gold? Silver? Bronze? Come and find out!

What has the world learned from the Olympics? Read Ephesians 3:20-21.

JULY Birthdays

George Wall 2 Phyllis Short 5 Bill Brandenberger 8 Paul Clark 16 Robert Mangold 16 James R. Barnes 19 **Bobbie Chapman 19** Marlys Davenport 21 Joanna Esty 22 Elizabeth Copus 23 Joyce Dass 23 Linda Rouches 25 Amanda DeSmidt 26 Pastor Jim 28 Deborah Fleming 29 **Doris Gott 31**



We will be holding a **Congregational Meeting** on the 28th of July at 11:00a following Worship Service in the Sanctuary to discuss and vote on the proposed changes of The Church of the Palms' *Constitution & ByLaws*. A soft copy of these changes will be sent out via email on the 12th of July and available printed copies in the front office July 14th. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us. Thank you!

"Everything you've ever wanted is sitting on the other side of fear."

- George Addair



National Alliance on Mental Illness Help Line
1-800-950-6264 https://www.nami.org/help
Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800.273.TALK
Suicide/Crisis Hotline TEXT 988
Translifeline 877.565.8860
Veteran's Crisis Line 800.273.8255 press 1
Pastoral Care - Pastor Jim Alexander 623.792.5295
https://thepalms.org/Tools2Thrive

1-2-3: Decreasing Anxiety

Regardless of the origins of feeling anxious or jumpy, there is short-focused exercise than can alter your current experience with an emotional response. (Most effective with anxiety, but can be beneficial with other agitating thoughts, like obsessive thinking, fear, etc.)

The beauty is that you can do it anytime, anywhere ... even in public or a meeting and no one knows you are doing it. It is most successful if you can step out of the room or change locations in your current room ... for 'movement' is a key neurological component to bring about change of thoughts.

Step One: Move some part of you body three times in a row; preferable in a different way each time. Capture in your mind your thoughts and say them internally or aloud with each movement.

Step Two: Look at three different things in your environment; with each object say it in your head or aloud.

Step Three: Listen for three different sounds in your environment (it can even be your breathing); with each sound say it in your head or aloud.

Your body ... your mind ... your choice. That is the motto of taking charge of emotions that are distressing you. Please note this works primarily for anxious feelings, jumpy or edgy. I would not recommend it using it to shut down your tears if crying because of grief, a loss, or hurt feelings. This is a tool to use so you can stay focused on your tasks at hand.

Should you find some initial relief with these three steps; repeat the three steps and go deeper into *being in charge of* managing your anxiety.

Kay F. Klinkenborg, MA
Spiritual Companion
Member Spiritual Directors International
Retired: RN; LMFT; Clinical Member AAMFT
Author, poet, adult education facilitator

Summer Special Music Each summer, we invite members of our congregation to share their many talents during the Special Music Segments of worship. There are still several slots available: July 21st, 28th, Aug 4th, and Sep 1st. Whether you sing, play

an instrument, read one of your original poems or share another creative arts gift that has not been mentioned here, you are invited!! There is a sign-up

sheet on the Music room door. Please feel free to sign up to share your talents with us! If you have questions, please contact Pastor Jim. We look forward to a great summer of beauty and inspiration!!



Each Sunday in July from 9:45a. until 10a.

FAVORITE

HYMN SINGING!

Stop by the Hymn Sing Barrel, fill out a hymn request slip! Then, lift your voice and sing!

A Documentary on Christian Nationalism Bad Faith

If you are interested in a historical view of the development of Christian Nationalism, it would be worth your while to watch he documentary *Bad Faith*. This feature length film explores the rise of Christian Nationalism in the United States. It uses archival news clips, to present a narrative describing the secretive political machinery that has long sought to weaken and destroy American democracy and install an authoritarian vision of the United States. The film was released just this March 2024 and has a running time of less than a half hour. It is available on Amazon Prime and YouTube for 99 cents, as well as other streaming platforms.





Social Justice Leadership Team Presents the 2024 Summer Film Festival

Want to spend some time with church family members and friends watching a film/video and learning about the Social Justice issues being addressed by The Church of The Palms? Want to cool off from the heat and enjoy air conditioning produced by our solar panels? Want to enjoy popcorn and soft drinks provided by the Social Justice Leadership Team? If the answer to any of the above is "Yes" you are in luck!

On Fridays, from 1:00 to 2:30p, starting in mid-July and running through the end of August, members of the Social Justice Leadership Team will present a video/film related to one of our social justice ministries. Time will be provided for discussion and Q and A about the film/video and the ministry provided by our church.

July 19th; The Present - A timely film on life in the West Bank and the issue of Palestinian human rights.

Shopping for a present for a loved one can be a difficult task at times, but Yusef and his daughter face a greater problem. The Present, a short film by director Farah Nabulst, is a realistic presentation of the difficulties a Palestinian faces in moving about on regular daily errands in the West Bank. This film won the BAFTA award and Oscar nomination for best short film of 2020. In addition, if time permits, we will watch a ten-minute clip from the documentary regarding the accusation of Israel practicing Apartheid and the story of Daoud Nassar, a Palestinian farmer who established the Tent of Nations with the motto of "We refuse to be enemies", and his ongoing 30-year battle to hold on to his property in the West Bank. We hope to develop a deeper understanding and awareness of the issues involving the Palestinians relationship with Israel. Come and watch the film and plan to join the discussion.

July 26th; Building Belonging in a Time of Othering –A john powell video speaking about how to connect in a time of divisiveness.

John A. Powell (who spells his name in lowercase in the belief that we should be "Part of the universe, not over it, as capitals signify") is an internationally recognized expert in the areas of civil rights, civil liberties, structural racism, housing, poverty, and democracy. He is the Director of the Othering & Belonging Institute at the University of California, Berkeley, a research institute that brings together scholars, community advocates, communicators, and policymakers to identify and eliminate the barriers to an inclusive, just, and sustainable society to create transformative change toward a more equitable world. In this video john addresses Othering, the process of demeaning a person or group based on their identity, leading to exclusion and intolerance (Racism, Religious Intolerance, Homophobia, Xenophobia, Hate Speech, etc.). He also speaks of Belonging, the opposite of Othering, which implies the acceptance and inclusion of all people and how we can make a difference. Can make a difference? How? Let's discuss!

August Film/Video Topics (details in August Palm Leaf)

August 2 – Immigration August 9 - Homelessness August 16 – Criminal Justice August 23 – LGBTQ Equity August 30 – Creation Justice





This year we are focusing on plastics. Below is a timeline of plastic and how it became the issue that we face now:



*Synthetic plastic was patented in the early 1900s and marketed as a sturdy, reusable material.

*In 1956, at an annual conference, trade magazine editor Lloyd Stouffer urged executives to stop emphasizing plastic's durability and focus instead on making a lot of inexpensive, expendable material.

*It was hard at first to convince people to throw away plastic items. Adults in the 1950s lived through the Great Depression and World War II, and they were trained to save. *When people became concerned about the amount of plastic litter and waste seen in public, the industry pushed recycling as an environmental solution. But multiple investigations have shown that plastic industry representatives have long known that recycling would probably never be effective on a large scale.

*Activists say lawsuits, like the one New York State Attorney General Letitia James filed against PepsiCo for endangering the public with plastic pollution, are one way to hold companies accountable.

It's important that we continue to hold companies accountable. Some ideas are to not purchase plastic items in bulk, but remember when the local butcher wrapped meats and cheeses in paper and tied it with a string? I was happy this week when I found a mail-order pharmacy that has refillable glass containers and the refills come in biodegradable packets! I have not purchased from them yet as I'm waiting to complete my move, first. They are called "CabinetHealth.com" and they also have over the counter pain relievers, allergy meds, etc.

Again, I have not tried them yet, and this is not an endorsement. Simply a company that I have followed since they've done over-the-counter meds for some time and now have recently opened the prescriptions "counter." If you do try them, please let us know your thoughts by emailing me: Kabestik1@gmail.com.

Have a great plastic-free week!

~ Shari

Have you ever thought about how many lives our items on the Mission Table touch?

Some of our items never see the table because they go to our I-Help homeless program, Feet N More Shower Trailer, Indigenous people on the Reservation, Dysart children and adults, Eve's Place to

name a few. The monies that come from you when you purchase items or donate to our Needles and Pins fund, go to Children's Camp that cannot afford the registration; things like the new vehicle for the Shower Trailer, water for the needy and children, defib for emergencies right here at The Church of the Palms,

Prayer Shawls to the Grief Program, and the list goes on Thank you for your generosity.

Love & Prayers, Needles & Pins Gals



THANK YOU FROM DYSART COMMUNITY CENTER

Dysart Community Center has

two summer camps in full swing at our El Mirage and Surprise locations. We are so grateful to the members of Community Center The Church of the Palms for all that you have done to help our families place their children in safe and rewarding care this summer. Many of our families told us that they were in a position of either leaving their children at home alone or quitting their jobs because they could not afford child care. With your help 36 families have been able to receive full and partial scholarships for over 60 children to attend summer camp. The difference it will make in their lives is not only child care, but nutrition as each child receives breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. They are learning about positive personal development, physical education, STEM, and reading. This enables them to begin the next school year without suffering the summer learning loss that is often experienced. Again, we are so very grateful to you all as both sites are thriving and are a hub of activity. Please visit our YouTube or Facebook pages or just drop in for a chance to catch us hard at work and play!

Annie Ansell, Chief Executive Officer,
Dysart Community Center

Vaccine Recommendations

years, one including coverage for pertussis

Influenza – Yearly, preferably in September or October, over age 65 one should have the high-dose vaccine

RSV – Once after age 60

Shingles – One set of two vaccines after age 50

Prevnar – Once after age 65

Pneumovax – Once after 65

Prevnar and Pneumovax may be indicated every five years for those with lung or heart disease.



A Community of Grievers, Healers & Caregivers

owering grievers to heal in mind, body, and spirit individually and in community with others.

Doing Grief™ Community Healing Project Interfaith Chapel for Healing at The Church of the Palms

Healing Project programs are for EVERYONE - grievers, professional healers, and caregivers who are experiencing loss and life-shifting change due to death, broken relationships, illness, aging, a loss of meaning or hope, or any loss that causes grief. Event flyers and brochures are on the narthex table and in the chapel. Join us!

Grief Support

Online Healing Circles (via Zoom) – Shea Darian, Spiritual Director:

Monthly confidential spiritual direction small groups (Four to five participants). Times & days vary; registration required. Call Shea at 602.315.8480 for more information (Limited spots available).

RSVP FOUR WAYS: (1) The Church of the Palms/HP Sign-up Book, (2) Email Connect@DoingGrief.com, (3) Call 602-315-8480 or (4) Online RSVP form on "Healing Project" page at DoingGrief.com

Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest NW Valley I-HELP Success Story

Lutheran Social Services receives several employment leads, housing opportunities, and other resources almost daily. The employment opportunities are shared with the guests that are seeking employment in a specific field or guests that are wanting a career change. BankWork\$ is one of the leads Lutheran Social Services received and was shared with Jenny (name changed for privacy). BankWork\$ is a Career Training Program in the banking industry. It is an eight-week program that provides several benefits to the enrolled trainees.

During the training program, they offer financial assistance for transportation, interview clothing, job placement support upon graduation, and direct connections to the hiring bank partners. The trainees are trained in bank terminology and regulations, customer service skills, resume writing, and interviewing skills. A Bank Teller has the potential to earn \$18.00 per hour, Associate Banker \$21.00 per hour, House Loan Service Specialist \$21.50 per hour, Client Service Representative \$22.00 per hour, and a Fraud Specialist \$23.76 per hour. The trainee picks which area they are most interested in. Jenny came into I-HELP in October 2023. Upon meeting with her case manager, she immediately discussed the need for employment and the desire to start job searching as soon as possible. Working with her case manager to identify employment and training opportunities, she was provided with the option to enroll in the BankWork\$ training program. Jenny took advantage of that opportunity and started the training program within two weeks of being in I-HELP.

Jenny completed the program and graduated in December 2023. She shared feeling more confident in her ability to find employment in the banking industry, a sense of accomplishment for completing the program, and her self-worth has increased. Jenny has completed a few interviews and looks forward to doing more. She shared that she is excited about her future. Jenny has received a housing opportunity, as well. She has taken advantage of the opportunity and has moved into her own place in January 2024 and ended her homelessness. I-HELP is extremely proud of Jenny, the work she has put into the program, working with her case manager, reaching her goals, and most importantly, recognizing her self-worth. Congratulations Jenny!

GIFT CARDS FOR NEW LIFE!!

Mission and Outreach invites you to support New Life Center in July and August. New Life Center in Goodyear is Arizona's largest domestic violence and sexual assault refuge, serving more than 1000 children and adults each year. Their mission is to help eliminate domestic and sexual violence through support services, education and expertise. This year New Life Center is in need of gift cards for their clients. Gift cards to grocery stores, Amazon, Target, Walmart, UBER or gas stations would be greatly appreciated and used by these survivors as they embark on a safe journey for themselves and their children. You can purchase gift cards through our RaiseRight program

(formerly Scrip), through another vender, or donate any amount to Mission and Outreach and we will purchase the cards for you! Linda Hofmann will be available on select Sundays in July and August in the Narthex if you would like to purchase your gift cards through RaiseRight.

Please contact Linda with any questions. If you would like to donate via cash or check, please note that the donation is for New Life Center on your check or envelope.

THANK YOU FOR BEING THE CHURCH!!

From the Prison Ministry Team...CAMP GENESIS THANKS YOU!



Thank you to everyone who has supported Camp Genesis. From monetary donations, we were able to provide 24 sunglasses, 20 reusable water bottles and 12 lip balms—all necessary items for the campers. Thank you to the people who have already volunteered to pray daily for a child who attends Camp Genesis. Remember these children feel stigma, fear, anger, loneliness, abandonment, shame, and more, through no fault of their own. Someone in their immediate family (parent, sibling, grandparent) has been taken away from them by incarceration. At the end

of the prayer year, these children receive a heart that tells them someone prayed for them. An observer saw many of them cry and be amazed that someone they don't know cared about them. At Camp Genesis these children can feel safe and enjoy fun childhood activities with compassionate adults and understanding children. Praying for them daily can continue to support these innocent children whose lives have been impacted by the criminal justice system.

Please consider praying daily for one of these children. The first week in July we will have the children's names and ages. Please sign up on the sheet in the narthex after church or contact Nancy at nnonini19@qmail.com.

AND thank you for the 36 bags of clothing we contributed to the Arouet clothing drive and the 20 sets of hair care products we gave to Locks of Love at Perryville. One Locks of Love participant said the event made women feel good about themselves and so appreciate the hair care goody bags. Thank you for being a generous church!





ONE PERSON CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THIS HEAT WAVE...YOU! HEAT RELIEF BAGS

INDIVIDUALLY, WE CAN DO THIS ON OCCASION AT LITTLE COST. Dollar Tree has the items. Keeping two to three small filled bags in your car and passing through the window can bring some life-saving and comfort items to the homeless this summer. Look at the Heat Relief Table in the Narthex for a list of what to put in a bag. We did this last year...we want to continue to touch people one by one.

ONE HEAT RELIEF BAG (If you use plastic grocery bags...tie it shut). Or use a gallon zip lock bag (if you wish them to see the supplies).

PRIORITY ITEMS (if you can't do them all):

- *1 16 oz bottle water
- *1 Nutrition or power bar
- *1 Packet handwipes

(Wet Ones or something similar)

- *1 Small tube sunscreen
- *1 Tube lip balm or Chapstick
- *1 Lotion

*NOTE: Some homeless people

have dental issues. Think of using soft Fig Newton breakfast bars; small containers of one serving peanut butter; small packages of crackers with cheese/peanut butter (six to a pack).

OPTIONAL ITEMS:

- *1 First aid kit...or package of Band-Aids
- *1 Hat (not required)
- *1 Pair sunglasses
- *1 Cooling towel....if you can find them or a red or blue bandana handkerchief they can wet down to cool



July 1-31

Monday, 1 1:00p IHELP KH

<u>Tuesday, 2</u> 9:00a Men's Fellowship @ George's Café OS

Wednesday, 3 9:00a Needles & Pins Craft Group BR

Thursday, 4-Office Closed Happy July Fourth!

Friday, 5 Office Closed

Saturday, 6

Sunday, 7 10:00a Worship Service SA 11:00a Fellowship Hour KH

Monday, 8 10:00a Executive Board BR 1:00p IHELP KH 2:00p Trustees Mtg BR

Tuesday, 9

9:00a Needles & Pins Craft Group BR

Thursday, 11

Friday, 12 Office Closed

Saturday, 13

Sunday, 14 10:00a Worship Service SA 11:00a Fellowship Hour KH

> Monday, 15 1:00p IHELP KH

9:00a Men's Fellowship @ George's Café OS

<u>Wednesday, 17</u> 9:00a Needles & Pins Craft Group BR 11:00a Feet N More Shower Trailer OS

Thursday, 18

Friday, 19-Office Closed

1:00p Social Justice Film Festival

Saturday, 20

Sunday, 21 10:00a Worship Service SA 11:00a Fellowship Hour KH (Summer Special Music slot available!)

> Monday, 22 1:00p IHELP KH

Tuesday, 23

Wednesday, 24 9:00a Needles & Pins Craft Group BR

Thursday, 25

Friday, 26-Office Closed
1:00p Social Justice Film Festival

Saturday, 27

Sunday, 28
10:00a Worship Service SA
*11:00a Congregational Mtg SA
11:00a Fellowship Hour KH
(Summer Special Music slot available!)

Monday, 29 1:00p IHELP KH

Tuesday, 30

Wednesday, 31 9:00a Needles & Pins Craft Group BR

SA=Sanctuary; B2L=Bridges to Learning; HY=Hybrid; KH=King Hall; BR=Boardroom; OS=Offsite; A=Narthex; CHP=Chapel; PP=Pastor Paul's Office; MR=Music Room; BRC=Behle Resource Center