

The Palm Leaf

IMAGINE!

The Church of the Palms, UCC
14808 N Boswell Boulevard
Sun City, Arizona 85351

Doing justice.

Loving kindness.

Walking humbly with God.

A LETTER FROM PAUL

MAY 2025



“Why was Jesus killed?” a parishioner from yesteryear asked me. It sounded like a simple question at first. But it wasn’t! The answer involves power, jealousy, vulnerability, and a whole lot more.

Barbara Brown Taylor would remind us that Jesus wasn’t killed by atheism and anarchy. She would tell us that Jesus was dragged down by law and order allied with religion – which is always a deadly mix. Jesus was crucified for standing up the Empire.

All of which brings us to a lesson during this Season of Eastertide: Beware of those who claim to know the will of God and are prepared to use force, if necessary, to make others conform. Beware of those who cannot tell God’s will from their own!

The other side of the “Why was Jesus killed” question is why was Jesus raised from the dead? Again, that is not a short fifteen second answer! But the simplest way to address that is to show us love incarnate and provide us an example of how to treat people.

Therefore,

- We cannot dehumanize another human and say that we follow the risen Jesus.
- We cannot cheer on people in power who are actively targeting and harming the hungry, the poor, the sick, the elderly, the veteran, the disabled, the different, and the stranger and still say that we follow the risen Jesus.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer reminds us that to follow the risen Jesus means “Not to simply bandage the wounds of victims beneath the wheel of injustice. We’re to drive a spoke into the wheel itself.” Thus, effectively stopping the injustices from happening in the first place.

This Season of Eastertide will bring us many surprises. Life blooms fresh in the actions of those who follow the risen Jesus. So, how are you showing that you follow the resurrection Jesus?

Shalom, Paul



"My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry."

-James 1:19

We are at the beginning of summer and many of us will leave soon for friendlier climates. The Executive Board meets regularly throughout the year so we will be here to serve as needed. Wherever we spend the summer, each of us will be in an environment that is feeling increasingly hostile and negative. As we do our best to enjoy summer it's good to keep in mind how we respond to situations around us. In the March 2025 *The Palm Leaf*, Dr. Phil Ladd shared thoughts on setting boundaries. It's important to focus on self-care and the boundaries we set as we lead our day-to-day lives surrounded by so much hostility. If we set boundaries for ourselves, I believe it will be easier to deal with the bombardment of negative actions and verbiage that occur every day. Boundaries will also help us peacefully coexist with people with whom we come in contact who are supportive of the malevolence.

How we act and react are crucial to counteracting some of the enmity that exists. And we must do something in response to it because, if we do nothing, we are part of the problem. The Executive Board has been very fortunate to have

Jessica Hermann work with us to understand boundaries and reactions. She uses Brené Brown's book, *Dare to Lead*, to help us understand how we as individuals can step up, be heard and lead. Each of us has the ability, through our daily actions, to be effective leaders in our lives. Through our individual leadership we can bring about change and possibly make our world better.

I strongly encourage you to add Brown's book to your summer reading list. While many of the book's concepts apply to a business setting, her principles also apply to day-to-day life and can be used to navigate through the current adversity. Pastor Jim has copies of the book along with a study guide; please see him if you're interested. Personally, I think reading the entire book is worthwhile, not just the parts related to the guide. Jessica will provide a seminar in the fall to help all of us who would like to better understand and implement the ideas put forth in *Dare to Lead*. The book provides tools that can be useful to all of us as we – *Imagine! Doing justice. Loving kindness. Walking humbly with God.*

**Victoria McWilliams,
Executive Board chair**

May Worship Themes

May 4: Read John 20:19-31. Pastor Paul will be preaching. We all have experienced trauma – spiritually, physically, and/or emotionally. What can we learn from our scars? What can falling into a sewer ditch teach us?

May 11: Pastor Paul will be back in the pulpit. Bring your appetite – He's talking about breakfast! Mmmmm. Read John 21:1-19.

May 18: Today is Mental Health Sunday across the United Church of Christ. The members of our WISE Steering Committee will lead us in worship today. Pastor Jim will be preaching from Psalm 88 as we ponder the question, "Where is God in the Unknowing?"

May 25: Read Acts 16:13-15. What's the difference between a maintenance church and a missional church? Pastor Paul will be preaching.



May Birthdays

Bertie Fitch 5
Marimae Roder 8
Nancy Nonini 9
Judy Green-Davis 10
Bill Bontadelli 10
Richard Campbell 13
Linda Wilson 14

Beth Moore 15
Douglas Lehman 16
Opal Willie 16
Fred Lindstrom 16
Max Klinkenborg 21
Nancy Tsuchiya 21
Larry Cornelius 22

Terry Olthoff 27
Jane Zukowski 27
Sharon Pitts 28
Donna Hermann 28
Marcia James 29
Elaine Dinse 29
Liz Adler 30

2025 Advent Devotional

Our church is a blessed community of believers with a host of highly insightful and qualified leaders both lay and clerically trained. Our Lifelong Learning Team has taken on the challenge to solicit Advent devotionals prepared by our congregants and compile them into a booklet that we can share for mutual encouragement from the first Sunday of Advent (November 30th) through Christmas day.

This April Palm Leaf announcement soliciting these devotionals allows plenty of time for 26 of you to plan and consider submitting a devotional for this project. Perhaps some of you have already written one that you could “polish up” and submit.

We would ask that you submit your devotional by November 13th. You should attach your devotional to an email message and send it to my email address at juddrinsema@yahoo.com

To help us plan ahead please send a message to the above email address indicating your intention to contribute to this project.

Thank you all for your willingness to enrich our coming advent season.

Judd Rinsema
The Church of the Palms Lifelong Learning Team



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May is Mental Health month. On Sunday, May 18th, our W.I.S.E. Steering Committee will be leading in worship as we observe Mental Health Sunday. As a W.I.S.E. Congregation for Mental Health, we strive to be a safe space, a welcoming, inclusive, supportive, and engaged space for all people. That includes folks with a variety of mental health challenges. We believe that all people, at one time or another in their lives, face a variety of circumstances which may affect mental health. In those circumstances, it is wonderful to know that one is never alone. There are many resources available on line and right here in our congregation. Pastor Jim, Kay Klinkenborg, Andrea Stefanov, Bert O'Neill, Phil Ladd, Suzanne Boisclair, and Judy Jondahl have been trained in Mental Health First Aid. While we do not diagnose nor treat people who may be in crisis, we can offer a variety of resources and support, facilitating connection between mental health professionals and those who require the services.

How can you be W.I.S.E.? Here are some suggestions:

Be a Friend:

"A friend loves at all times..." (Proverbs 17:17a). Listen without judgment. Provide companionship. Offer a ride or a meal. Respect confidentiality. Avoid shame and guilt. Remember that we all have and we all are impacted by mental health.

Remember that Words can Hurt:

"Rash words are like sword thrusts..." (Proverbs 12:18a). Pay attention to the words you use and how they affect the people around you. Avoid labelling and stereotyping people.

Stop the Stigma:

"We, who are many, are one body in Christ" (Romans 12:5). Challenge negative attitudes toward mental health and neurodiversity whenever you encounter it. Question your assumptions. Correct misinformation about mental health challenges, substance use disorders, trauma, and brain differences.

Educate Yourself:

"Does not wisdom call, and does not understanding raise her voice?" (Proverbs 8:1). Learn the facts about the various challenges that can affect mental health, including substance use disorders, neurodevelopmental difference, trauma, and brain disorders. Realize that mental health is physical health.

Thank God for Neurodiversity:

"Wonderful are your works" (Psalm 139:14). Be aware that we all process the world around us differently. Celebrate and affirm neurodiversity and the many gifts that each person brings.



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CHOICES ABOUT HOPE: NOT A SINGULAR IDEA

“Hope is often misunderstood. People tend to think that it is simply passive wishful thinking: I hope something will happen but I’m not going to do anything about it. This is indeed the opposite of real hope, which requires action and engagement.” Jane Goodall

I get excited when a word jumps at me with new understanding. I had that experience this past month. It lead to some reflections on ‘what are our choices about activating hope?’

Hope is not automatic, and it is a verb, it is intentional. We have to chose it. Some people are ‘wired’ to be more optimistic; some more doubting; some more pessimistic. If I claim the inheritance of my creation by The Divine...hope is in my DNA. Now I admit, and have met clients who were so traumatized, or had major chemical imbalances that hope was not a word they could activate. I am not speaking of those extreme experiences. I am speaking of all the possible adjectives I found for hope in my reflections on the word this past month.

Relentless Hope: I just read, See No Stranger: A Memoir and Manifesto of Revolutionary Love by Valarie Kaur. Kaur is a lawyer, journalist and author. This woman, raised in Sikh faith tradition of her family had much to teach me. One resounding discovery was from their holy scriptures and poems: *chardi kala*. The Sikh tradition weaves this phrase into the daily vernacular and spiritual approach to live with *chardi kala*. *It means “relentless hope”*.¹

She distinguishes this from optimism: it is not about the future, it is about living in the NOW, as if the present is all there is.¹ A focused intentional approach. A choice. What changes for us if we see the word of hope as choice? Revolutionary daily living is the potential. This does not deny pain, loss, tragedy or reality. But, becomes a chosen style of action. Your own self-advocacy is a way to think of this. The discovery of *chardi kala* took me on a trip through my life examining my own interaction with the word hope.

I continued to turn to see what other types of hope I could find that matched my experiences, my clients, or witnessed from others. Hope is not a feeling, but a way of being. Hope is not some ethereal magic place to be.

Learned Hope: The first type of hope I remember, and was told to me when older, was **learned hope**. A child learns that the parent will return, they don’t know that with the first exit of the parents from their daily life. Also, I cry...they will feed or change me. Many other examples too numerous to mention.

Requited Hope: Since early 1980’s, after undergoing intensive therapy for PTSD, childhood abuse and severe depression, I chose a life motto: “What return can I make?” I have received vigor for life, hope for the future and gained confidence in myself. For this gift, what could I repay and how, became the focus. There is a word for that intention: *requite*. It means to restore, repay or recompense.² I live with an intentional **requited hope**.

Resolved hope: I had a motto as a therapist that I would not give up on my clients AND that when they could not hold a since of hope...I would hold it with/for them until they could grab hold. Sharing hope when times are hard or painful is a gift we can give as we journey with each in this life. The scriptures are full of words of hope; at the end of this essay is a list of 15 scripture passages of hope.³

Rejoicing Hope: Christians just experienced songs that exhibited the hope that exists with the Resurrection of Jesus. And it was with gusto and passion I heard songs and prayers of hope because of this historical story.



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Revealing Hope: Best example I can share in is the words under rejoicing hope; the Easter Resurrection was also a **revealing hope**. But for another example: waiting for the surgery outcome, the surgeon comes to share that 'we got it all', cancer free! That is one sure example of revealing hope.

Resolved Hope: I chuckle, as I recall my step-father challenging me that I couldn't do something, wouldn't follow-through: "I'll show you". And I would do it. Now, I think he was using reverse psychology on me...and it worked. But that is **resolved hope**. And I see it daily in our town, on the TV, people protesting, writing emails, letters to say we want government done different...hear us. That too is resolved hope.

Restorative Hope: This is creating conditions for change and success. Best example I can share is the Criminal Justice Team at our church which focuses on a variety of ministries to walk with, provide resources, advocate for changes in judicial laws. I-HELP was a **restorative hope** program for sure. The CARE TEAM's ministry participates provides a type of this as we share a journey with parishioners to let them know they are not alone and are loved. All ministry can be restorative when done with love and compassion.

I like to sum it up as 'being seen, heard and believed', second chances unconditionally given with the courage to walk with another on their journey.

The next two types of hope weave in and out of each other, yet, are distinct.

Righteous Hope: I experience this as actions chosen to stand for justice, rights of others and setting boundaries for myself. Sometimes this is prompted by intense anger at the wrongs being observed or experienced. It can also rise out of despair, when I tap into letting go of 'learned helplessness' and use my voice. Advocacy for others/self is spurred by **righteous hope refuses silence, acquiescence or complicity with the oppressors; whether that be individuals, institutions, or governments**.

Revolutionary Hope: Taking a stand on injustice, standing up with/for the marginalized is what can change laws/ culture and individual's rights. This is revolutionary. It is about needed justice changes to make our world a better place.

Reasoned Hope: This is a belief that when I have done my best, that is all I am called to do. The rest of the 'ripple', I don't get to be in charge of the outcome. I am only called to be the authentic, loving, compassionate me.

Resilient Hope: It is described as springy, flexible, supple means **able to endure strain without being permanently injured**;⁵ able to withstand or recover quickly from difficult conditions.⁶ It has been my privilege to meet numerous resilient people; they have been inspiring to me. In counseling, often I inquire after I meet someone who had done a remarkable job during a difficult time..."how did you do that, what skills did you use?". Their response: "I just did what had to be done."

They hadn't thought to consider their resilience took them through the journey. Resilience is an outstanding character trait. We need to claim it, name it, share the word with others when we see them exercising that trait.

One of the best quotes I use often: "All is well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well;" by Julian of Norwich.

Resonant Hope: Hope can be contagious! There is an energy shared when hope is shown or spoken. Resonant means vibrations, sound that continues and vibrates forward.⁷ Enthusiasm for what can be is another way to describe this. Why keep hopeful thinking to ourselves?

Resonant hope is not Pollyanna thinking. It is about being problem solvers, adapting to change. It is not uncommon if one expresses thoughts of hope, particularly today, that an inquiry will come, 'what gives you hope?'



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An opportunity to share how we personally experience hope or that we can come through to the other side of a hard time.

Refreshing Hope: (refreshing, relaxing) Psalms 42:1 speaks poetically of this: "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for you, O God." Reprieve, a break to lean back into being loved, nurtured are all examples of **refreshing hope**. Most often this is found in quiet time with God, meditation, in nature, or a familiar calming environment. Music can take us to this experience of refreshment; so can any art form. Beauty is oft an unclaimed type of hope, but is a catalyst just waiting for us to engage to have the experience of refreshment or relaxation.

I would be amiss if I didn't add that encouraging words, a letter, a phone call, email can spring us into refreshing hope. Or we can bring that same type of hope to others by doing those acts as well.

Reassuring Hope: I have developed a new appreciation and understanding of this type of hope over the past 9 years. Our son, who was recovering from severe alcoholism, homelessness and a para-psychotic break had estranged from me for 7 years during his recovery. The incessant pain and agony, I had to find some relief, a reprieve. I found myself in daily prayer asking for grace to accept "IS". I capitalized it as it became a different meaning that eased my pain significantly. I could move forward, engage with life and not be consumed with the 'future or outcome' or our relationship. "IS" became a state of owning reality with no expectation of how things would play out. Owning I had no control over the situation or his choice of estrangement. Reality is 'NOW' and "IS. That is all that could be owned and I wasn't out ahead of myself into should, wants, or trying to change things. It became a mindful way to be and still love him. I shut no doors...but I couldn't force any doors open either.

I wrote in my journal: "Hope is remembering in-the-mean-while." I found myself intensely living with **reassured hope that was undefined**. Frankly, it was my spiritual and mental salvation to come to this discovery. Maybe this personal type of hope makes sense to you. Maybe it is a type to experiment with. I can only vouch, it has saved me from despair. I am pleased to say that a reunion 2 ½ years ago occurred; and the relationship with my son is on good sure footing.

So, I leave you with an exploratory assignment. Be on the observation deck looking for numerous types of hope; maybe considering practicing some intentionally. Let's see if we can expand our understanding of the word 'hope' that theologians, philosophers, psychologists, physicians and essayists write books about. We are more clever and insightful than we think. Look at your own life pattern of 'hope'. When and how was it there? I leave with the scriptures below to read for reassurance of God's design and hope in our lives.

Scriptures about Hope

Isaiah 40:31; Micah 7:7; Romans 5:3-4; Romans 15:13; I Corinthians 13:13; Jeremiah 29:11; Romans 12: 12; Hebrews 11:1; Isaiah 40:31; Romans 8:24; I Peter 1:3; Psalms 84:1; Psalms 18:1.

REFERENCES

¹ Kaur, Valerie (2016). See No Stranger: A Memoir and Manifesto of Revolutionary Love. p 240.

² Merriam Webster Dictionary; Cambridge Dictionary.

³ The BibleStudyTools Staff on 04/04/2024.

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/topical-verses/hope-bible-verses>.

Four Council on Social Work Education | CSWE <https://www.cswe.org>.

Ginwright (2015), further expands on the concept of radical healing and argues for the three types of hope that create spaces of



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opportunities: (1) Relational Hope— changing conditions with communities based on trust and relationship; (2) Restorative Hope— creating conditions and opportunities for communities to prosper and thrive; and (3) Political Hope— engaging in political decisions in everyday lives to articulate opportunities to flourish

⁵ Oxford Languages Dictionary

⁶ Merriam-Webster Dictionary

⁷ Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

©Kay F. Klinkenborg, MA (April 2025)

Spiritual Director

Member Spiritual Directors International

Author, poet, Adult Education Facilitator

Retired: RN, LMFT, AAMFT (AM ASSOC of Marriage & Family Therapists)

"Your Advocacy Team in Action?" Are you saddened/upset/disappointed by the cancellation of the I-HELP program? Do you want to do something about it? A group of advocates is trying to restart the I-HELP program this Fall, but they need financial help from Maricopa County and the cities of Surprise, Peoria, and Glendale. The first coordinated action of our Social Justice Advocacy Team will be to support this effort. Our Pastors (and pastors of other congregations) will be sending letters to the elected officials in Surprise, Peoria, Glendale, and Maricopa County urging them to support and finance this effort. In addition, your Social Justice Advocacy Team will be asking all of the members of our congregation to reach out to these elected officials urging them to support I-HELP 2.0. After the service next Sunday, May 4th, we will distribute a sample copy of our Pastors' letter and easy-to-follow instructions for our members to reach out to the various elected officials. We will also have computers set up in the Boardroom to help you quickly send an email or a letter (we'll even address the letter and pay for the stamp). This is simply a numbers game – the more letters, the better. We encourage all of our members to send some quick letters/emails. Your efforts, along with similar efforts at other churches, can make a big difference in restarting I-HELP with very little effort on your part.

INFORMATION SESSION COMING THIS MONTH! Once again the Evangelism & Growth Team is encouraging visitors to join them at the next Information Session held on **Wednesday, May 14th, at 3:00p in King Hall.** If you are weary from your search for a church, consider attending this session to discover if The Church of the Palms fits your needs. If fascinated to learn more, please sign up in the Narthex. You will be given the opportunity to visit with Pastor Paul and/or Pastor Jim and a few other awesome leaders, learn some church history, available opportunities and church structure. Also, introductions are fascinating plus a bonus of getting answers to your questions. A guided tour of the church will be provided, followed by a light supper with fellowship and a photo session. Bring basic information as there are a couple of forms to complete if you decide to become a new member. ***New members will then be introduced to our congregation at the following Sunday, May 18th, service.**

"Concentric 8"
by Amy Creek



2024 Social Justice Champion Award!

The Church of the Palms has become a beacon of social justice in the west valley and beyond. Members and friends of the church have tackled issues ranging from LGBTQ+ equity to homelessness, to criminal justice reform/prison ministry, and several more. This emphasis on social justice has come about through the encouragement and support of the pastors and the dedication and passion of regular people “Being the church” and pursuing their individual passions. We have indeed become a community of justice champions in the minds of those who have been lifted up through our efforts.

Each year, the Social Justice Leadership Team recommends individuals who represent the many champions among us to the Volunteer Engagement Committee for consideration for the award.

This year the Volunteer Engagement Committee (VEC) selected

Nancy Nonini

as the 2024 Social Justice Champion.

Nancy will tell you that, even as a child, God put it on her heart to help others, whether it was Trick-or-Treating for UNICEF in elementary school or making the fruit baskets to give to the shut-ins when her church youth group went Christmas caroling.

Nancy became interested in Criminal Justice Reform when she was exposed to the fact that so many incarcerated people had mental health issues and often needed treatment more than incarceration. A spiritual director called her “A weaver--she didn’t have novel ideas but has a knack of brining others’ ideas together.” Nancy heard about Arouet Foundation’s work, Red Mountain’s Pen Pal Program, Episcopal Diocese of AZ’s Art Shows and Camp Genesis, Bridge’s Re-Entry and Trish’s A Place for Hannah. And she just brought all of them into The Church of the Palms’ Criminal Justice Reform/Prison Ministry Team. She believes the more awareness of the need for criminal justice reform and the resultant change we create the less need for prison ministry.

Nancy also coordinated presentations on immigration, volunteered in the nursery of the Phoenix Rescue Mission, had her children accompany her to collect food for food banks, volunteered for a reading program for at-risk second graders and coordinated an elementary school fund drive for a food gleaning program. If you know Nancy, you might notice that she can become *too passionate* when thinking about the rights of others being taken away—voting rights, right to choose, free speech, etc., and of course the right to a normal life after completing a jail or prison sentence and paying your debt to society.

When Nancy learned she was receiving this award she said, “This award is not about me, but about all of you who have been pen pals, prayed for Camp Genesis kids, been changed by attending one of our Re-Entry Simulations, been touched by Trish’s Sunday message or the artwork from the women in Perryville. You are the social justice champions!”

And this year we have another special award to present.

The “Homeless Ministry Volunteer Extraordinaire” goes to Sharleen Kakolewski.

Sharleen first became involved with the Feet N More Shower Trailer at the Salvation Army in Surprise. She was one of our first volunteers when we were excited to have given over 100 showers. Sharleen was first our barber for the homeless but was soon doing everything needed to give showers. From the beginning we loved Sharleen’s laugh and sense of humor. We learned that she liked to tease others and could take as well as she gave. She was focused on the homeless, got to know their names and their stories, and gave them encouragement and often a hug.

Sharleen’s compassion for the plight of the homeless matched her desire to serve their needs set the standard for all of our volunteers. Sharleen recently moved to Colorado to help members of her family. She will be deeply missed!



I-HELP Success Story

This is the last I-HELP case story from Lutheran Social Services-Southwest because the program is discontinued due to lack of funding. "Maggie" was the last guest we helped move into a one bedroom apartment. The Church of the Palms provided not only her favorite air mattress she used for months while she was the lead guest but all the other furnishings were donated by church members.

"Maggie's" text:

Sad that the CotP 🌿 furniture program has ended. 😞
God & CotP folks have been very good to me/us.
Thank you so much for everything ❤️
You've made the apartment a home. 🏠
🙏🙏🙏

For March we highlight Maggie's success story. This is a story about a woman who faced multiple losses. Through her grief, she committed to ending her homelessness with the support of her case manager, compassionate volunteers and community resources. The support helped her navigate her challenges, showing her that even amid fear and uncertainty, hope exists. Her resilience is a reminder of the power of community support.

Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest NW Valley I-HELP Success Story Maggie came to Arizona to take care of her ailing father. She was the only child (out of three) that was willing to uproot her life in California to do so. Maggie, her siblings, and her father had a plan for what was to happen after their father passed away. However, things did not go in Maggie's favor, and she was evicted from her father's home soon after. She had nowhere to go, no family in Arizona, and limited funds. Maggie reached out for assistance and was provided the contact information for St. Vincent De Paul. St. Vincent De Paul was able to put Maggie in a hotel for three days. On the third day, Maggie was provided the contact information for I-HELP.

Maggie came into I-HELP with hopes of being in shelter for a short time or until she could get things worked out with her siblings. Again, things did not work in Maggie's favor. The case manager encouraged Maggie to participate in creating a case plan for her while she is waiting for her legal/family issues to get figured out. Maggie still insisted she would not be in the program much longer (this was the first time Maggie experienced homelessness) and she would not need a case plan. The case manager informed Maggie that one would need to be created but her input was vital due to the case plan would be a guideline to end her homelessness.

Maggie finally agreed to participate in creating her case plan. The case manager and Maggie created her case plan, Maggie registered with Arizona at Work, she applied for state benefits, and she began obtaining her necessary personal documents. Maggie continued to work on her legal/family issues but understood the importance of working on her plan at the same time because time was passing her by. She created a daily routine for herself, and she became focused on ending her own homelessness. Maggie became the lead guest while in shelter. She expressed the feeling of being needed again, wanted, and appreciated. Maggie got a boost of confidence while at the same time starting to realize that she was going to be in Arizona for a little longer than she expected. Maggie started to take advantage of the housing opportunities that were provided to her. Finally, an opportunity opened for Maggie. Working with her case manager, The Phoenix Rescue Mission, the property manager, and The Surprise Resource center, Maggie was approved for her very own apartment. Maggie was excited and scared at the same time. She had a lot of questions and uncertainties about living alone. She began to doubt her ability to sustain her own apartment because she had been in the program so long. She didn't want to leave her friends, support, and connections that she had with so many people. The case manager and other staff encouraged her to take the apartment. It has been a long time coming but Maggie will be in her own apartment in just a few days. Thank you to The Church of The Palms for supplying Maggie's favorite air mattress, Lutheran Social Services for the Walmart Gift Cards, The Spirit of Grace Church for making her special quilt, The Phoenix Rescue Mission, The Surprise Resource Center, and to all the other host churches and volunteers that assisted Maggie through this journey.

Congratulations Maggie.

I-HELP CLOSURE and UPDATE

Our last night of hosting IHELP guests was March 24th. A gathering of 40 volunteers to bring closure for ourselves about the Heart Breaks and the Heart Joys was March 31st. Seth Dyson, the Director of Human Services and Community Vitality in Surprise, joined us. He explained steps that he and his department have made since Lutheran Social Services - Southwest (LSS-SW) announced on March 6th that they could no longer financially support the IHELP program. There are efforts to find funding from several West Valley City Councils, information sharing with LSS-SW staff, and discussion with various organizations as to what services they can provide if an IHELP 2.0 is created.

Nancy Mueller noted that, as volunteers, we can remain involved in our homeless ministry in a number of ways. Some are:

- Help with The Church of the Palms' Feet N More Shower Trailer (Contact Max Klinkenborg)
- Join TCOTP's advocacy network to contact legislators about Senate and House bills related to homelessness (contact Tom Theisen)
- Collaborate with summer heat relief programs in this area (Contact City of Surprise Resource Center 623.222.4673)
- Learn about ways to connect homeless with street outreach services (contact Phoenix Rescue Mission 602.346.3361 or City of Surprise 623.222.1550 about an app for your phone called SAFE).

Dyson noted that two homeless shelters in Surprise are in immediate need for meal providers.

It was suggested that our Monday night food crews continue to make meals that could be delivered to either New Leaf for families or HomeBase for youth over 18. A team will investigate possibilities.

Here are thoughts that were shared about the Heart Joys of IHELP:

- Blessings from all who ate with us.
- Successful housing of overnight guests for five plus years.
- My heart filled and eyes teared when guests had two to three helpings of food. Some said it was the first food in two days.
- Listening to our IHELP members and guests pray before a meal.
- Meeting new friends who are hopeful of their future.
- Seeing the signs our guests made about how they feel being in our church home.
- Glad there is a place to contribute for people who do not/cannot cook.
- Knowing our guests are clean, fed, and rested.
- Smiles when tired.
- People given dignity.
- The church living our mission.
- Move-in day.
- Glad I could coordinate monitors, be a monitor and supply food for our guests.

These were Heart Aches related to the IHELP closing:

- I'm sorry there is a need for IHELP in this world.
- Wish we could have helped more and filled the beds all year long.
- We will miss doing this important mission.
- There is sadness knowing that people we could help may not be helped because of human greed.
- The need for money to continue.
- That we couldn't help more.
- That our current government did carte blanche (used full discretionary power) cutting funds for many needed programs.
- We are not able to feed them and give them rest and love.
- I don't want the program to "fade away."

Your voice counts as city councils and supervisory boards make decisions on funding and staffing. TCOTP's Social Justice Leadership Team is evaluating ways to speak out - letters or in person. Let's find ways to help more, to build back, and to live our mission of caring for others.

~Nancy Mueller

Camp Genesis is coming!

Camp Genesis is the camp for children who have an incarcerated family member. If you are one of the wonderful people who have been praying for one of these children all year, please return the purple heart enclosed in a card sometime in May. Please keep the card simple with no mention of their family situation. Maybe include where you kept the heart to remind you to think of them and generally what you prayed for them. We will include a small crocheted heart for them to keep in their pocket to know they are loved. Thank you so much for being an encouraging support for these children! Bless YOU!



DYSART Community Center

For the months of May and June the Blessings Board is asking for

donations of bottles of water at Dysart Community Center (not reusable water bottles because they are not currently equipped with a water fountain to refill bottles). Their seven-week camp enrolls 125 children beginning May 27th, so the need is great. Since packets of water can be heavy, checks and cash are certainly welcome. If you choose a monetary donation, please indicate DCC Water on your check and place your donation in a church envelope.

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Also, Dysart Community Center cannot accept donations of clothing and household items during June and July because all of their storage areas are used for their summer camp. These donations will be accepted again beginning in August. Contributions of paper products such as paper towels, toilet paper and tissues are still gratefully received along with hygiene items used by the camp attendees.

Thank you, as always, for your generosity. Volunteers are still needed for adult classes for ESL, GRE, the high school diploma program citizenship classes. For any questions, please call Linda Hofmann at 623.242.6382.

Current Versus Deferred Planned Gifts

The Executive Board has endorsed a more proactive stance toward Planned Giving. The Blessings Board has prepared a new, updated brochure to be available to all members and friends of the church. I am also making periodic presentations during worship regarding planned giving. In between these presentations Current (outright) gifts to benefit the church and it's ministries are those given within the life of the donor. Current gifts are often part of an estate planning process just as deferred gifts are. There are two primary advantages to a current gift. First, the personal satisfaction of making the gift and seeing the gift make a difference. Working with the pastors and others, a need will be identified that can be met within the parameters of the donor's gift. Second, a current gifts within the lifetime of the donor may have significant tax implications. The gifts of both real estate and personal property may provide major tax advantages for the living donor. A listing of all assets needs to be taken to an estate planner/tax advisor to optimize tax savings over the remainder of their lifetime. Deferred gifts is what we most often think of regarding planned giving. After the death of the donor the designated gifts spelled out in the will or trust are the deferred gifts. The planning happens while the donor was alive and reflects what they wanted done with their assets.

-Max Klinkenborg

Lifelong Learning Team

LLL is excited to sponsor a special class: "An Exploration of LGBTQ+ from a Clinical and Theological Perspective," taught by Dr. Phil Ladd, an ordained minister and licensed psychotherapist.

Participants will also explore how Christian faith affirms and celebrates LGBTQ+ individuals as beloved children of God.

Progressives often face challenges from some Evangelicals. This class will equip you with tools to demonstrate that God accepts and affirms everyone, regardless of their sexual orientation or identity.

This Class will be **Wednesdays, May 7th & 14th at 10:00a in the Behle Resource Center.** A sign-up sheet will be available in the Narthex a few weeks before the class.

NEEDLES AND PINS CRAFT GROUP

We've recently received several special requests for custom knitted and crocheted items—like a crocheted ABC baby blanket and a knitted poncho in specific colors—and we're always happy to accommodate these kinds of personalized orders.

If you see something on our craft table that you'd like in a different color, size, or style, please don't hesitate to ask—we may be able to create a version just for you. And if there's something you haven't seen but would love to have, let us know! Honestly, we sometimes run out of ideas and truly welcome your suggestions.

Love & Prayers, Needles & Pins Gals



Water conservation has always been a challenge in the desert. Below are some ideas that may assist. Many of you may have implemented some, and some of you may find the ideas here intriguing. Then again, some of you may say “old news!” Hopefully, you’ll find one thing that will cause you to pause and think about it.

1. *Plant a desert garden: Not all desert plants are cacti (as seen in Pastor Paul's pictures). They aren't all prickly, either. Many desert plants have adapted to the arid environs of the desert. They will require less water than non-desert plants.*
2. *Put in a deck! What better way to not need to water than to have less grass? Also, a covered deck can make your outside area more livable in the “warmer” months!*
3. *Use a shower timer! Not sure about you, but when I get into a nice warm shower on achy muscles, I feel like I could stay there for an hour!*
4. *Considered air blowing or spot shining your car rather than using a hose to wash it. Using some elbow grease to shine up the chrome, clean the windows and an air blower (minus any pebbles) to blow off tree hockey, pollen, etc. can save many gallons of water each time!*

A good article listing many ways to conserve water in the home and yard is below:

<https://learn.eartheasy.com/guides/45-ways-to-conserve-water-in-the-home-and-yard/>

Happy conservation!

Dear The Church of the Palms,

I give you all my thanks and appreciation for the lovely celebration at the service and coffee hour for my last Sunday with you. I have loved this church since the first Sunday

I came in November of 2006. I grew up here in my faith journey in so many ways.

I will miss you dearly.

Love, Charlotte Harger

The LGBTQ+ Ministry Team

The LGBTQ+ Ministry Team has some exciting upcoming opportunities to be get involved in our ministry and local LGBTQ+ community!

On Saturday, April 5th and 6th, The Church of the Palms proudly sponsored a booth at the Rainbows Festival! It was a joyful celebration of love, inclusion, and the diversity of the LGBTQ+ community. Our volunteers had the opportunity to share words of affirmation and connect with festival-goers to reflect on our commitment to radical welcome and the belief that God's love includes everyone – without exception. Thank you to everyone involved – we are grateful for the opportunity to stand together in faith, pride and unity. Love truly lives here!

Current LGBTQ+ Arizona Legislation

We are currently tracking the below legislation that impacts the LGBTQ+ community within Arizona and we would like to share broadly for awareness. Please note this is not a full list of LGBTQ+ legislation in Arizona and the list we are tracking will continue to be updated as we learn more:

SB 1002 – This Senate bill prohibits school employees or independent contractors from using any pronoun for a person under 18 other than the one assigned at birth that aligns with their biological sex, unless they have written permission from the parents.

HB 2062 – This bill defines male and female entirely on the biological determination made at birth. It asserts there are only two sexes, and allows single-sex environments.

SB 1003 – This is the "bathroom" bill that provides for schools to provide reasonable accommodation for people of different sexes and abilities (bathroom and locker, etc.), but then it specifically prohibits having anything special for transgender youth.

HB 2438 – This prohibits sex change from one issued on birth certificate if it resulted from surgery.

Save the Date for Upcoming Events!

- Open & Affirming Sunday – Sunday, June 29th
- Transgender Day of Remembrance:
Saturday, November 15th

If you are interested in joining the LGBTQ+ Ministry, please contact Georgia Feiste! -Jessica R. Hermann



Biblical Translations

At a recent Lifelong Learning event, we viewed a documentary entitled 1946: The Mistranslation That Shifted Culture. Before we began, I share some interesting facts about Bible translations.

Concerning Paul's letters:

- There are no originals but copied verses from some of Paul's letters were discovered in 1931 when pages (leaves) were sold in Cairo to and translated by Chester Beatty from the University of Michigan. More pages would be purchased in the coming years.

Translated Bible

- The full Bible is available in more than 756 languages.
- The New Testament is an additional 1,725 languages.
- There are over 900 English translations, both complete and partial.
- The original texts were written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.

Many of us have had family Bibles and Bibles given to us. In our lifetime, we have seen an incredible number of translations. Some have been paraphrased like today's The Message.

At The Church of the Palms, we encourage questions, thinking outside of the box, and growing the Scriptures. We acknowledge that mistranslations have led to various forms of clobbering and weaponizing the Bible that only does violence against women, people of color, people of other faiths and against our LGBTQ+ brothers and sisters.

And there are many books and commentaries that give us opportunities to reflect upon and learn about Biblical authenticity, its historicity, textual meanings, and learn about the various theologies on display.

I'm currently reading a new release entitled The Bible Says So by Dan McClellan. To remain curious and not stuck in certainty I also purchased The Street Bible which is a shortened and paraphrased Biblical translation.

Mark Makowski

LIFELONG LEARNING

On April 16th, a group of approximately 28 members of the congregation watched the film 1946: The Mistranslation that Sifted the Culture. This film shows how the use of the word "homosexual" came to be used in the Bible, and it explores the problems of translating words from ancient Hebrew and Greek texts. The film display some aspects of the conflicts that occur between people reading of Biblical passages from differing versions of the Bible. The Church of the Palms owns a digital copy of this film. Anyone can view it on a church laptop at the church by arranging an appropriate available time with the church office.

Martin Meadows, *Lifelong Learning*

MAY Calendar

Thursday, 1

9:00a Feet N More Shower Trailer
@ El Mirage OS
2:30p Choir Rehearsal MR
3:00p Inspirit Bible Study BR/HY

Friday, 2—Office Closed

10:00a Labyrinth Walk Practice/Set up KH

Saturday, 3

9:00a World Labyrinth Walk
(TCOTP Labyrinth)

Sunday, 4

9:00a Choir Rehearsal MR
10:00a Worship Service SA
11:00a Fellowship Hour KH
11:00a I-HELP Advocacy Team BR

Monday, 5

10:00a Lifelong Learning Mtg BR/HY

Tuesday, 6

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

Wednesday, 7

9:00a Needles & Pins Craft Group BR
10:00a LGBTQ+ from a Clinical & Theological
Perspective Class BRC

Thursday, 8

9:00a Blessings Board Mtg BR/HY
12:00a Criminal Justice Mtg BR/HY
1:00a Social Justice Mtg BR/HY
2:30p Choir Rehearsal MR
3:00p Inspirit Bible Study BR/HY

Friday, 9—Office Closed

9:00a Feet N More Shower Trailer
@ St. John's OS

Saturday, 10

9:00a Feet N More Shower Trailer
@ Hit the Streets with Jesus OS

Sunday, 11

9:00a Choir Rehearsal MR
10:00a Worship Service SA
11:00a Fellowship Hour KH

Monday, 12

10:00a Executive Board Mtg BR
1:00p Advocacy Mtg BR/HY
2:00p Board of Trustees Mtg BR/HY
2:00p LGBTQ+ Mtg NA

Tuesday, 13

10:00a Ministry Council Mtg BR/HY
10:00a Feet N More Shower Trailer
@ Bicentennial Park OS

Wednesday, 14

9:00a Needles & Pins Craft Group BR
10:00a LGBTQ+ from a Clinical & Theological
Perspective Class BRC
3:00p Information Session KH
Newcomers Welcome

Thursday, 15

9:00a Feet N More Shower Trailer
@ El Mirage OS
2:30p Choir Rehearsal MR
3:00p Inspirit Bible Study BR/HY

Friday, 16—Office Closed

Sunday, 18

9:00a Choir Rehearsal MR
10:00a Worship Service/
New Member Recognition SA
11:00a Fellowship Hour KH

Tuesday, 20

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

Wednesday, 21

9:00a Needles & Pins Craft Group BR
10:00a VEC Mtg NA

Thursday, 22

2:30p Choir Rehearsal MR
3:00p Inspirit Bible Study BR/HY

Friday, 23—Office Closed

9:00a Feet N More Shower Trailer
@ St. John's OS

Saturday, 24

9:00a Feet N More Shower Trailer
@ Hit the Streets with Jesus OS

Sunday, 25

9:00a Choir Rehearsal MR
10:00a Worship Service SA
11:00a Fellowship Hour KH

Monday, 26—Office Closed

Tuesday, 27

10:00a Feet N More Shower Trailer
@ Bicentennial Park OS

Wednesday, 28

9:00a Needles & Pins Craft Group BR

Thursday, 29

2:30p Choir Rehearsal MR
3:00p Inspirit Bible Study BR/HY

Friday, 30—Office Closed

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