

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

JULY 2025



What Does the Lord Require? Come and See!

In a world that often feels chaotic and demanding, our 2025 church theme – “Imagine! Doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God,” – offers us a profound and refreshingly simple guide for living a life of purpose and connection. Micah’s timeless question, “What does the Lord require of you...?” resonates deeply with our progressive values and calls us to reflect on what truly matters.

This isn't a call to elaborate rituals or rigid doctrines, but rather an invitation to embody the very essence of our faith through our actions and our relationships. To “do justice” compels us to actively work towards a more equitable and compassionate world, challenging systems of oppression and advocating for the marginalized. It asks us to consider how our choices impact others and to stand in solidarity with those who are vulnerable.

To “love kindness” urges us to extend grace, empathy, and understanding to all. It’s about fostering a spirit of generosity and compassion in our interactions, both within our church community and beyond. In a society that often prioritizes individual gain, loving kindness reminds us of our shared humanity and the power of connection.

And finally, to “walk humbly with our God” invites us into a posture of openness and reverence. It acknowledges that we are part of something larger than ourselves, fostering a sense of humility and a willingness to learn and grow on our spiritual journeys. This isn't about self-deprecation, but about recognizing our interconnectedness with the divine and with each other.

Our worship services offer a vital space to explore these very principles together. They are a time to reflect on what it means to live justly, to cultivate kindness in our hearts, and to deepen our walk with the sacred. Here, we find strength in community, inspiration through shared stories and music, and a renewed sense of purpose to carry us through the week.

We invite you to join us this summer as we delve deeper into Micah’s powerful message and explore how we can collectively embody these values in our lives and in the world. Come, be nourished, be challenged, and be part of a community striving to answer the enduring question: What does the Lord require? We eagerly await your presence. Shalom, Paul



Executive Board

at The Church of the Palms, UCC

Monday, June 2, 2025 the Executive Board, Personnel Board and Volunteer Engagement Committee (VEC) met to discuss The Church of the Palms' (TCOTP) upcoming pastoral search.

The following is a result of the brainstorming session.

It is with a hopeful and prayerful heart for all TCOTP efforts that we share these thoughts with you.

As we enter this transitional time filled with anticipation, a palpable sense of grief, and a determination to see this through, we are reminded that our pastoral leadership has already given us a progressive prophetic theme to guide The Church of the Palms during the year 2025.

IMAGINE. We had not planned for Pastor Jim's resignation. But here we are! A congregation rooted in Social Justice principles and actions. An Open and Affirming statement that challenges our lives to be radically hospitable and provide a safe place for all. And a wisdom/prophetic community made up of highly gifted members who choose involvement over retirement.

"And what does the Divine require of us, but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with our God!" Micah 6:8

Grounded with the tools to manage our way, we have the confidence to begin this process of moving forward and putting in place the necessary steps to form a transitional plan. Cultivating our existing talents will enable us to be active DO-sciples. The readiness and willingness of our KIN-dom members will allow for the Spirit to actively work the pastoral soil.

This process has initial steps. With Pastor Paul's shepherding skills, we initially address our music ministry needs. And there will be members re-called into service.



Executive Board

at The Church of the Palms, UCC
continued

We don't know the future. And the work will seem a burden, at times. We are a wisdom-community. We know patience and have experience that our efforts will pay off.

The Church of the Palms is blessed with ground that is fiscally firm. We can step forth in faith. We can take chances. We have invited change. We expect challenges.

And technology gives us public witness with outdoor signage and to our active presence through our webpage. Maintaining and remaining relevant are critical as we aspire to be heard and seen by our members through worship, meetings, and gatherings.

This process has initial steps. With Pastor Paul's shepherding skills, we initially address our music ministry needs. And there will be members re-called into service. Think of the richness that already exists in our garden! A team will be formed to support our pastoral initiatives. God not only speaks but is cheering us onward!

The coming days and weeks will unfold because we dare to walk a progressive prophetic path. Together we discern and celebrate the Spirit in our midst. Justice, kindness and humility are our steps that will guide us on this journey. Come Holy Spirit! Come Inflammate our hearts!

The congregational input in this process will be determined once the transitional plan is in place. This is an important step as the congregational input (listening sessions) are critical to a successful transition.

Mark Makowski, Executive Board Secretary and John Durbin, VEC Secretary

July Worship Themes

July 6—Pastor Paul will be preaching. Read Luke 10:1-11. Fireworks are going off in our society. What can we say to the country we love?

July 13—Read Luke 10:25-37. The Good Samaritan is a familiar story. How does the story end? We aren't told! How will our story end? Be intentional! Pastor Paul will be preaching.

July 20—Pastor Jim will be preaching from Luke 10:38-42. What's new with the Mary and Martha story that might help us understand our calling?

July 27—Pastor Paul is back in the pulpit. Read Luke 11:1-13. The disciples asked Jesus to teach them a prayer. What would you tell someone if they asked, "Can you teach me to pray?" What are the basics of prayer?

News From the Office

Wendy Whitlock will be in the office as the interim office manager for awhile. We ask for patience as we work together during this transitional period.

If you need to reach the office, the summer hours are 9:00AM to 1:00PM. The email for the office remains the same: manager@thepalms.org



July Birthdays

George Wall 2
Bill Brandenberger 8
Robert Mangold 16
Jim Barnes 19
Bobbie Chapman 19
Marlys Davenport 21
Gordon Funck 21
Norman Krinsky 21
Joanna Esty 22
Elizabeth Copus 23
Joyce Dass 23
Amanda DeSmidt
Pastor Jim 28
Deborah Fleming 29
Doris Gott 31

If you would like to provide flowers for a Sunday morning worship in memory of someone, in honor of someone, or in celebration of a life event, there is a sign-up sheet in the narthex on the green tables.



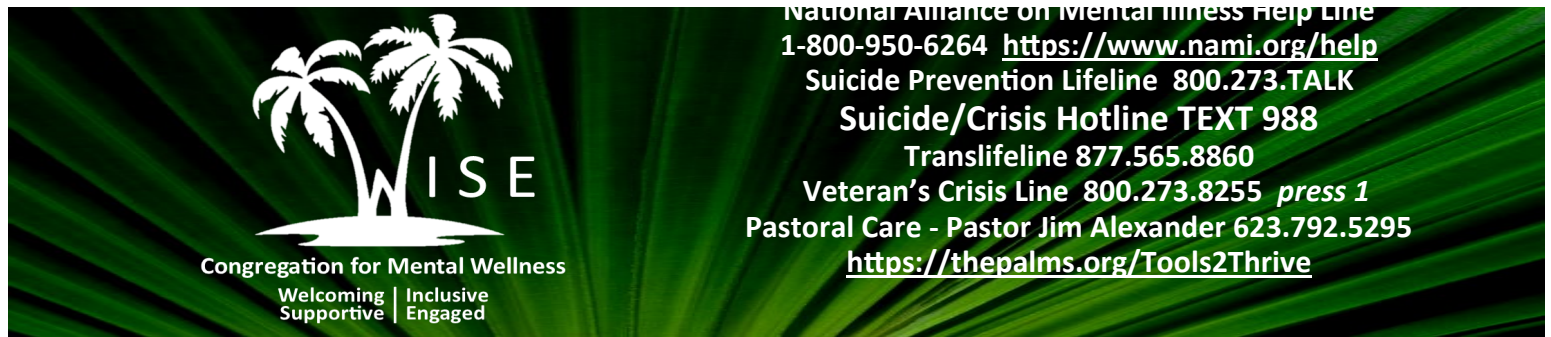
Sacred Spaces Team Established

The Worship Team is excited to announce that a work group has been established to design and facilitated activities and events that will take place within our sacred spaces on campus. The Sacred Spaces Team will be meeting very soon to establish a calendar of events like guided prayer, devotions, spiritual development, mindfulness, guided labyrinth walks, special worship services, personal self-reflection and more! The desire is to have a weekly activity alternating among the spaces that will be meaningful and supportive of our congregation and community. If you are interested in becoming part of the Sacred Spaces Team, please contact Jennifer Hoppe or Pastor Jim. We will provide more details to you.

Ellen Merchant, Rev. Susan Princehouse, David Klingensmith, Kay Klinkenborg, John Durbin, Rev. Lynette Turner, Deanna Delong, Linette Stenberg, Rev. Mark Makowski, Pastor Jim, Wendy Whitlock, and Jennifer Hoppe and Robin Dilley are the members of the Sacred Spaces Team. Many of them have facilitated events on the Labyrinth and in The Chapel at the Palms. We are grateful for the gifts of each of these folks!

**Be on the lookout for upcoming events
within the weekly order of worship.**





We have been a WISE Congregation for nearly 5 years. During that time, we have provided worship services, classes, trainings, and a variety of on-line support videos to the church and community. This has all been in an effort to live into our covenant. In these times of significant anxiety and uncertainty, our WISE Steering Committee wanted to publish our covenant and link to the Tools2Thrive resources in an effort to remind you that you are not alone. We stand ready to walk with you.

W.I.S.E. COVENANT

The Church of the Palms in January, 2020 began the process to be certified with the UCC MHN (United Church of Christ Mental Health Network) as a W.I.S.E. congregation (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaging). A Steering Committee for W.I.S.E. was formed as part of the ministry of the CARE TEAM of The Church of the Palms. This Covenant expresses our desire to make a commitment to all people to extend WELCOME, INCLUSION, SUPPORT and ENGAGEMENT with ALL PERSONS traveling life's journey with the goal of mental wellness. "We affirm that God loves all humankind and therefore each person has opportunity to serve in the full life and ministry of the Church."

We seek to be a community that cares for the whole person: body, heart, mind, and soul.

We recognize that mental wellness is on a continuum and stressors, loss, and events in life can challenge us at any point. We are committed to journey with individuals with **disabilities**, those with **mental wellness stressors or challenges**, **physical disease processes**, and the changes brought about by the **natural aging processes**.

- We commit to create a **WELCOMING** environment for people with mental wellness issues, challenges, individuals with disabilities and to their families and support persons.
- We commit to **INCLUDE** people with mental wellness issues, challenges, or individuals with disabilities in their life, in the work and leadership of this congregation.
- We commit to **SUPPORT** people with mental wellness issues, challenges, individuals with disabilities and their families.
- We commit to **ENGAGE** with other organizations that work at the intersection of mental wellness issues, challenges, individuals with disabilities persons. This includes, but is not limited to: Not-for-profits, national/state organizations, faith/spiritual/religious organizations. We also commit to **ENGAGE** in continued education for our congregation on these topics.

The Church of the Palms commits to train individuals interested in The **Mental Health First Aid**, a course developed and accredited by the **National Council for Behavioral Health** and sanctioned through the United Church of Christ Mental Health Network and the Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ. Individuals successfully completing this training will wear identifying badges when at church or on church sponsored excursions or events.

[Check out our Tools2Thrive](https://thepalms.org/Tools2Thrive)



CARE Corner

Brought to you by The Church of the Palms'
CARE & SUPPORT Ministry Team

Benevilla Launches Free Workshop Series for Seniors

Benevilla announces a new lineup of free monthly educational workshops hosted at the Banner Olive Branch Senior Center in Sun City. These sessions are designed to empower seniors and caregivers with valuable tools and knowledge on a variety of aging-related topics. Each workshop begins at 12:00p as lasts about an hour. Registration is encouraged but not required. Call 623.584.4999 to reserve your seat or log on to: benevilla.org/education-workshops-2025.

♦August 13th - Dementia Behavior Triggers and Hot to Respond. Gain insights into the stages of dementia and practical caregiving strategies for each phase.

Banner Olive Brance Senior Center
13049 North 103rd Avenue

"Do You Have Questions? We Have Answers!"

Our Care & Support Ministry Team has several facets. We support our homebound and ill church members and friends. Through our Faith Community RN Jayne Peak we offer blood pressure checks and advice. We work with our W.I.S.E. team to support folks dealing with mental health issues. And we seek to provide resources for many other issues.

Are you looking for information on Advance Directives, Living Wills, or Health Care Power of Attorney? We have an excellent booklet from Hospice of the Valley. Do you need information on Will Planning or Fiduciary Planning? We have it. Other than an attorney, you can always review the information available on Freewill.com to research all the information you will need to prepare a will on your own. Are you needing Hospice or Palliative Care info? We have this, too. These and other materials can be found on the green tables in the Narthex. Please feel free to take and use them, and share them with others.

Our Ministry Team would also be very happy if you would share resources (organizations, people) that have been helpful to you as you deal with life issues. We would simply share that information so others could make contact if they wish. You can provide this information to any member of the Care & Support Ministry Team. We want to be there for you!

Rev. David Klingensmith, co-chair

NEEDLES & PINS CRAFT GROUP

Needles and Pins has not taken the summer off to head for cooler places. We are still meeting every Wednesday in the Board Room from 9a to 11a. Do drop by and join us for conversation, and a bite of something yummy along with a cup of coffee. Take a peek at our table in Fellowship Hall on Sunday after church. Don't see something you would like? Just ask and maybe we can accommodate you. Would you like to join us and brush up on your crocheting, knitting, or sewing skills? Maybe just a little conversation in a cool spot. We would love to have you.

Love and Prayers Needles and Pins

The Needles and Pins Craft Group is running low on our supply of sewing notions for the **Twiddle Muffs** we create for individuals living with dementia. These comforting muffs provide sensory stimulation and help soothe anxious hands—and they rely on a variety of textured, tactile items. We're asking for donations of any miscellaneous sewing notions you may have tucked away at home.

Helpful items include:

ric rac, small bells, large beads, small zippers, faux fur, and any other textured materials that can be securely attached.



The Lifelong Learning Team has suggested the following guidelines for submitting your contribution to our congregational Advent Devotional booklet: The four weeks of Advent should follow the following themes:

Week One, “*Hope*,” Week Two, “*Peace*,” Week Three, “*Joy*,” & Week Four, “*Love*.”

Articles should open with a scripture passage followed by the devotional ending with a prayer. All of this should be 272 words or less. Submissions should be submitted to committee member Judd Rinsema at **juddrinsema@yahoo.com**. Submissions should be made by November 1st, 2025 in order to allow enough time for compilation and distribution (to date we have eight members who have indicated their willingness to contribute, so we need 18 more. Please consider making a contribution to our efforts).



DYSART Community Center—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 which began 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.



Fellow Church Members.

A note of thanks for sharing boxes of cereal with the Dysart Community Center. Your kindness has helped 60+ children get their day off to a good start. A heartfelt kindness and a full tummy is a joy! Dysart Community Center thanks you. Cereal contributions and deliveries will continue through the summer months for the need continues as the center provides activities and comfort during the school break. Imagine a world where children aren't hungry. Thank you for sharing God's love.

~Donna Meadows

COMING AUGUST 3RD THROUGH SEPTEMBER 14TH

Each summer we always look forward to
Our Favorite Hymn Sing

Make sure you stop by the Favorite Hymn Barrel, load up a hymn request form with your favorite hymns, and place the forms in the barrel. Then come to church each Sunday at 9:45a.m. as Pastor Jim and Elaine lead us in song.



Pastoral Search Team Meets

We all know that no one person can replace Pastor Jim! Musician, Theologian, Humorist, Athlete, Friend! It's going to take several folks to cover what he does for us!

We have addressed the music part by hiring Jennifer Hoppe to expand her role as Director of Music and Worship. (Hooray!). She will now help lead choir, small singing ensembles, and coordinate special music within worship. She will also oversee our technical aspects of worship – video, mics, etc. We are blessed with her leadership!

The Search Team also met and discussed hiring someone for the pastoral care and worship leadership that Pastor Jim performs. As we shape who and what we want and need, please pray for the process and any potential candidate for the position.

Additionally, you have a voice in the process. There is a box in the narthex for you to write your questions, share your hopes, dreams, and imaginations. The Search Team will read them all.

The group consists of:

Suzanne Boisclair, Larry DeLong, Georgia Feiste, Jessica Hermann, Phil Ladd,
Victoria McWilliams, Terry Starr, Lynette Turner, and Pastor Paul.

On June 14, 2025 our LGBTQ+ Team hosted a Conversation Café. Many from our congregation the LGBT Club of Sun City, Community Church of Hope, and First Church PHX UCC were in attendance. The conversation and fellowship were rich. Here are the high points of the event. You are encouraged to attend the next

Creating a Safe Haven: A Step Toward True Inclusivity

Building a truly inclusive community demands more than just good intentions. It requires deliberate action, thoughtful reflection, and a commitment to ensuring that everyone feels seen, heard, and valued. During our recent Conversation Café, we explored what it means to create spaces where people from all walks of life can come together and feel a genuine sense of belonging.

At the heart of inclusivity lies the concept of safe havens—environments where individuals can embrace their authentic selves without fear of judgment or exclusion. These spaces are cultivated through visible acts of inclusion, thoughtful gestures, and a shared commitment to mutual respect and understanding. They are not static but evolve as we listen, learn, and adapt to meet the needs of our community.

Our discussions emphasized the importance of asking hard questions, such as “Who is missing at the table?” This inquiry is essential to identifying where representation falls short and taking proactive steps to include those voices. Tangible measures, such as community feedback and surveys, can provide valuable insights into where progress is being made and where more effort is needed.

Education emerged as a cornerstone of fostering inclusivity. Whether through thought-provoking films, open discussions on LGBTQIA+ topics, or one-on-one conversations, the ability to learn from diverse perspectives is vital to deepening our understanding of one another. Events such as small group gatherings and shared activities also serve as bridges, connecting individuals across divides.

Creating a truly inclusive community is a continuous journey. It requires active listening, honest self-assessment, and a dedication to fostering environments where everyone feels supported and valued. As we move forward, let us remain focused on building a collective sense of belonging - one grounded in shared purpose and mutual respect.

July Calendar 2025

Tuesday, 1

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

Wednesday, 2

9:00a Needles & Pins Craft Group BR

Thursday, 3

9:00a Feet N More Shower Trailer
@ Santa Teresita OS

Friday, 4—Office Closed

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

Saturday, 5

Sunday, 6

10:00a Worship Service SA
11:00a Fellowship Hour KH

Monday, 7—Office Closed

Tuesday, 8

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

Wednesday, 9

9:00a Needles & Pins Craft Group BR
1:00p Pastoral Search Team BR

Thursday, 10

Friday, 11—Office Closed

2:00p Feet N More Shower Trailer
@ St. John's Lutheran Church OS

Saturday, 12

Sunday, 13

10:00a Worship Service SA
11:00a Fellowship Hour KH

Monday, 14

2:00p Board of Trustees Mtg BR/HY

Tuesday, 15

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

Wednesday, 16

9:00a Needles & Pins Craft Group BR

Thursday, 17

9:00a Feet N More Shower Trailer
@ Santa Teresita OS

Friday, 18—Office Closed

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

Saturday, 19

Sunday, 20

10:00a Worship Service SA
11:00a Fellowship Hour KH

Monday, 21

Tuesday, 22

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

Wednesday, 23

9:00a Needles & Pins Craft Group BR

Thursday, 24

Friday, 25—Office Closed

2:00p Feet N More Shower Trailer
@ St. John's Lutheran Church OS

Saturday, 26

Sunday, 27

10:00a Worship Service SA
11:00a Fellowship Hour KH

Monday, 28

Tuesday, 29

Wednesday, 30

9:00a Needles & Pins Craft Group BR

Thursday, 31

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