



The Palm Leaf

■■■■■■■■■■ A SEASON FOR EVERY MATTER ■■■■■■■■■■

The Church of the Palms

14808 N Boswell Boulevard
Sun City, Arizona 85351



A Letter from Paul

June 2026

Ten years ago, on June 1st, I began my ministry with the Church of the Palms, and what a transformative journey it has been. Together, we have co-created a community that truly reflects the Kin-dom of God. It has never been about one person; it is about the power of us—a collective moving in spirit to answer our call for justice and love.

As we look back, here are ten milestones that define our shared path:

1. **Articulating Our Identity:** We crafted a mission statement that acts as our foundation: *"Sharing God's Unconditional Love, Justice, and Extravagant Welcome."*
2. **Radical Inclusion:** We didn't just talk about welcome; we lived it. From raising the Rainbow and Progressive Pride flags to our joyful presence at the Pride Parade and Rainbow Festival, and our sacred observations of ONA Sunday and Transgender Day of Remembrance.
3. **Dignity on Wheels:** We expanded our outreach by purchasing a new bus and the shower trailer for our *Feet-N-More* ministry. Our commitment to housing justice remained steadfast through IHELP and our various sheltering partnerships.
4. **Holistic Wellness:** We became a W.I.S.E. congregation (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged for Mental Health), proving our resilience by not just surviving the pandemic, but finding new ways to thrive and connect.
5. **The Gift of Music:** We enriched our liturgical life with a new organ and a beautiful grand piano, ensuring our worship continues to be soulful and vibrant.
6. **Stewarding Our Space:** We modernized our infrastructure—from chillers and boilers to six new A/C units—while prioritizing the safety of our community with updated security and entry systems.
7. **Growing Our Leadership:** We celebrated the ordinations and welcomed the unique gifts of Jim Alexander, Debby Stinton, and Pastor Mark to our staff.
8. **Creation Justice:** We took bold steps toward sustainability by installing solar panels and LED lighting, adding water bottle refill stations, and dedicating ourselves to Creation Justice Sundays.
9. **Expanding Our Reach:** We revitalized our campus with a new glass sanctuary entrance, improved lighting, and state-of-the-art A/V equipment to ensure our message is accessible to everyone, everywhere.

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10. Sacred Spaces: We deepened our spiritual landscape by installing our Labyrinths, the *Homeless Jesus* sculpture, the Pet Memorial, alongside a complete renovation of our Chapel.

And the Spirit keeps moving...

Beyond this list, we have deepened our social justice advocacy, renovated the Fountain Patio, doubled our endowment to ensure a sustainable future, and modernized our constitution and bylaws. Our digital sanctuary has also flourished, allowing us to reach a wider "online" congregation than ever before.

Wow! The Spirit is truly doing marvelous things through this community. I am so grateful to be on this journey with you.

Of these many milestones, which one has most deeply impacted your own spiritual journey at Church of the Palms?

Shalom, Paul



Executive Board at The Church of the Palms, UCC

One of my favorite memories of living in the Midwest during the summer was a road trip to Porter Oklahoma for a Peach Festival. Porter is a small town that annually lines their main street with many activities such as handmade crafts and booths for children of all ages to try their skill at. The all day delight was the free Peach ice cream that the fire department served to all those who ventured by and of course there was the most cherished trip out to the Peach Orchard. We would return home with fresh picked warm peaches with dreams of Peach Pie, Peach Cobbler, and my not so famous Peach Jam (oh- and more pie!). Baking, eating, and sharing Peach Pie was our shared joy of midsummer.

Here in Arizona summer joys look a bit different, but there are many moments to experience and to share. Clear cool mornings with scattered clouds and an occasional hot air balloon, territorial humming birds, and skittish quail with a line of babies in tow are always a delight.

On Sunday morning, it is my heartfelt joy to find a welcoming church family as I walk into The Church of The Palms. This joy comes together like the many flavors that go into a pie. It is built with the warmth of a shared hug, the layers of a great sermon, and music that gives rise to your spirit with a sprinkle of love topping it all.

Just as a pie comes together and is shared – Sunday morning worship brings to our congregation a shared spiritual nourishment of faith, hope, and love.

And I am thankful.

Donna Meadows

Executive Board Member-at-Large

June Worship Themes

June 7: 10th anniversary celebration. Paul preaching. The Power of Us. When we work together, God things happen! Micah 6:8. Communion Sunday.

June 14: Paul preaching. Genesis 18:1-15; (21:1-7). Sarah laughed. What do we laugh at and why?

June 21: Dr. Toni SWC Conference Minister preaching. Juneteenth.

June 28: LGBTQ+ Pride Sunday. Dramatic reading from "The Boy, The Mole, The Fox, and The Horse." Finding our tribe and deepening the relationships.



Gail Galante 6/2

Heidi Saupe 6/3

Patricia Haskell 6/4

McKinnley Annas 6/5

Christine MacNeil 6/7

Tracy Atkinson 6/8

Linda Rinsema 6/11

Don Zoss 6/11

Melissa Heutmaker 6/14

Patricia Bunch 6/19

Michael Langfeldt 6/20

Debbie Hill 6/21

Lucille Clark 6/24

Larry DeLong 6/24

Mary Hoy 6/29

Now Hiring: Executive Assistant to the Conference Minister



The Southwest Conference (SWC) is seeking a highly capable and mission-aligned **Executive Assistant to the Conference Minister**, a trusted partner who will help advance the ministry and leadership of the Conference through exceptional administrative and relational support.

This is more than an administrative role. It is an opportunity to serve the wider church by supporting the daily work, priorities, and communications of the Conference Minister. The ideal candidate brings both professional excellence and a deep respect for the values, relationships, and rhythms of faith-based leadership.

See Wendy in the office for more information

LGBTQ+ MINISTRIES

At Church of the Palms, love isn't just something we say — it's what we do. We stand for LGBTQ+ rights because justice should include everyone. We support LGBTQ+ people and their families with affirming care, inclusive celebrations for life's big moments, and a safe space to connect, heal, and belong. We march, we speak out, and we show up. Because everyone deserves a community that has their back.

June is Pride Month — a time to celebrate the courage, joy, and dignity of our LGBTQ+ community. Pride honors the struggles, the victories, and the simple truth that every person deserves to live openly and be loved fully.

Open and Affirming Worship Service: Celebrate Pride Sunday, June 28. Join us for a special Open and Affirming worship service inspired by the gentle wisdom of friendship, compassion, and courage. The message will feature a mini-play based on "The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse", inviting us to reflect on what it means to care for one another, embrace our true selves, and journey in hope, love, and belonging. The Church of the Palms UCC, Sun City AZ.

Phoenix Pride Festival Booth Update. Pastor Mark spoke with Daniel Zapata, Scottsdale Congregation UCC about joining their booth at Phoenix Pride Festival Oct 18-19, 2026. He's inviting other churches and pursuing booth pricing. He likes the UCC slogan "Not That Church...no judgment...no kidding." Stay posted for more updates.

Mark Your Calendars:

- Open and Affirming Sunday: June 28, 2026
- Phoenix Pride Festival Oct 18-19, 2026
- Transgender Day of Remembrance Labyrinth Walk: Nov 20, 2026, 9:00 AM
- Transgender Day of Remembrance Reading of Names: Nov 21, 2026, 2:00 PM

Get Involved! Feeling called to help? The LGBTQ+ Ministry Team needs you — your voice, your skills, your energy. Whether you can lead, serve, or help with one event, your time changes lives. Jump in. Contact Georgia Feiste: lgbtqplusteam@gmail.com or Marie Johnson: mariejohnson60@outlook.com



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 877-330-6366
Translifeline 877.565.8860
Veteran's Crisis Line 800.273.8255 press 1
Pastoral Care - Rev. Mark Makowski 623.792.5295
<https://thepalms.org/Tools2Thrive>

PLEDGE OF NONVIOLENCE: Recommitting Ourselves to Nonviolence Behaviors

James McGinnis was a well-known US teacher of peace and nonviolence; he was also a conscientious objector. He was the Director of the Institute for Peace of Saint Louis University, St. Louis, MO. One of his famous publications was Call to Peace: 52 Reflections on the Family Pledge of Nonviolence (1998). It is still in print. James died in 2009, but his legacy of peace and nonviolence lives on.

These are intensely troubling; we witness a lot of violence verbally and visually: through wars, hate crimes, abuse, and our selections of what to watch on the Internet, TV, etc. This is a good opportunity to recommit ourselves to being more conscious of nonviolent interactions in our daily lives.

Here is the "Pledge of Nonviolence" offered for families. I print it in hopes that it might be spread far and wide. You might consider reviewing James' list and adding to it ways you have learned that were inadvertently violent...such as: words we unconsciously use like: kill, hurt, eliminate, hate, etc.

Making peace must start within ourselves and in our family. Each of us commits ourselves as best we can to become nonviolence and peaceable people.

To Respect Others: To respect myself, to affirm others, and to avoid uncaring criticism, hateful words, physical attacks and self-destructive behavior.

To Communicate Better: To share my feelings honestly, to look for safe ways to express my anger and to work at solving problems peacefully.

To Listen: To listen carefully to another, especially those who disagree with me, and to consider others' feelings and needs rather than insist on having my own way.

To Forgive: To apologize and make amends when I have hurt another, to forgive others, and to keep from holding grudges.

To Respect Nature: To treat the environment and all living things, including our pets, with respect and care.

To Play Creatively: To select entertainment and toys that support our family's values and to avoid entertainment that makes violence look exciting, funny or acceptable.

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To Be Courageous: To challenge violence in all its forms whenever I encounter it, whether at home, school, work, community and to stand with others who are treated unfairly.

©McKinnis, James (1998). Call to Peace: 52 Reflections on the Family Pledge to Nonviolence.

Written by Kay F. Klinkenborg, MA
Spiritual Director
Member Spiritual Directors International
Author, Poet, Adult Education Facilitator
Retired: RN; LMFT; Clinical Member AAMFT



CARE Corner

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

On Thursday, June 11th, Benevilla will host our Aging Well: Your Journey, Your Way community education and resource event at Sun City Christian Church from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM. This free event is designed for older adults, caregivers, and families looking for trusted resources, education, and support related to aging well, brain health, caregiving, and community services.

The event will feature:

- A special guest speaker from Hospice of the Valley presenting on healthy brain aging, mild cognitive impairment, and dementia
- Over 30 trusted community resource partners
- Health and wellness resources
- Caregiver support information
- Adaptive gym demonstrations
- Door prizes and giveaways



Benevilla

We know many families within faith communities are quietly navigating caregiving responsibilities, aging concerns, and questions about available support. We hope to connect them with helpful resources and encouragement in a welcoming environment.



TO REGISTER SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT: Benevilla.org/Caregiver-Connect. For more information call (623) 584-4999



It truly has gotten to the point that I sometimes feel like I'm the grim reaper. Constantly bringing bad news and telling y'all what we, and the world, are doing wrong. This month I've decided to focus on some GOOD news! We'll review the good news in sustainability around the world. The sad part is that many of those initiatives in the US have been canceled, delayed, or otherwise. I'm extremely hopeful that we'll get back to it in the future.

Clean Energy Milestones:

- Clean Energy is now surpassing electricity demands in many places! 90+% of new electricity is being generated from resources like wind, solar, and hydro!
- Solar and Wind are breaking records in the US, also! Some states are making solar adoption more accessible and affordable. Frequently, more electricity is being produced on major grids by solar and wind than natural gas.
- A group of 60 countries have banded together to create a "road map" to transition away from fossil fuels.

Wildlife and Ecosystem Restoration:

- There is a massive cleanup project in the Pacific which has pulled tens of thousands of tons of floating plastic from the ocean!
- Commercial fishing bans in Asia have resulting in Porpoise and other fish biomass in population.
- Other Global Forests are seeing a resurgence of various species (i.e. Tigers/Jaguars).
- Sea Turtles are no longer on the extinction list!

Policy Innovations:

- France has banned the use and manufacture of many "forever Chemicals". Sales of items that include PFAS in consumer goods have been banned. France has joined a growing list of other countries that are "cleaning up" supply chains.
- In places like Hong Kong, they are using discarded oyster shells to rebuild/restore endangered shellfish reefs, which help to stabilize shorelines and filter water. YAY!

In sum, there's LOTS of good going on in the world, even here in the US. While our efforts have been handcuffed, I do believe it is only temporary. Please, if you have any questions, comments, requests for future coverage, please contact me at kabestik1@gmail.com.



Peace, Shari

Resource: <https://www.PWC.com>

Pill Bottles Collection

The Creation Justice Team has begun partnering with Mathew 25 Ministries in Ohio to help with their community relief programs. We have sent 285 prescription bottles for them to (continued on next page)

reuse in developing countries around the world while caring for the environment by keeping these bottles out of landfills. The work of Matthew 25: Ministries helps the poorest of the poor and disaster victims locally, regionally, nationally and internationally regardless of race, creed or political persuasion. By rescuing and reusing products, Matthew 25: throughout the United States and in 70 countries around the world provides basic necessities, nutritional supplements, educational materials, micro-enterprise supplies and disaster relief across the US and worldwide. The Creation Justice Team has a collection box in the Narthex. Please keep bringing us your empty prescription bottles so we can continue to support this mission.

Thank you for Your Donation of Reusable Water Bottles to Children's First Academy



For the last several years, our church has provided bottled water for kids attending Children First Academy (a school for homeless kids near downtown Phoenix). The water is provided for kids as they ride the bus to and from school in the hot months of the year. Starting last year, we provided reusable water bottles. The school has installed drinking fountains (like the one near our King Hall entrance), which have a spout for refillable water bottles. This eliminates the need for plastic water

bottles, which are used once and discarded. Thanks to your generosity, we donated over 500 reusable water bottles this year. Thank you for being the Palms of Jesus.

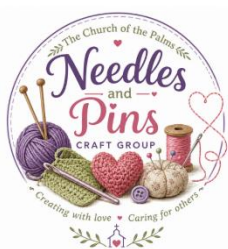


Homeless Ministry Reaches People of All Ages

Thanks to your generosity, the Church of The Palms delivered 150 cases of water and several large containers of snacks to homeless youth attending the Children's First Academy in Phoenix. The thank-you note from the school said, in part, "The water will help so much on the hot days ahead, and the teachers appreciate the snacks they can now give to their students... may God bless you all." We are a blessed church when we "share God's unconditional love, justice and extravagant welcome" and continue to be the church!



Needles and Pins Craft Group You're Invited!



We meet every Wednesday from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. in the church Boardroom. Come on by and see what we do and enjoy a chat with coffee and a snack. You'll find a warm and supportive group ready to share ideas, inspiration, and plenty of laughter.

We hope to see you soon!

June Calendar

Monday, 1

Tuesday, 2

9:00a Men's Fellowship @ George's Café OS
10:00a Othering and Belonging BR
2:00p InSpirit Sacred Reading/Scripture
Psalm 33 BR
5:00p AA Big Book Study (Closed Mtg.) BR

Wednesday, 3

9:00a Needles & Pins Craft Group BR

Thursday, 4

10:00a Worship Team Meeting BRC

Friday, 5—Office Closed

Saturday, 6

9:00a N-Q Beehive Breakfast KH

Sunday, 7

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

Monday, 8

10:00a Executive Board Meeting BR
2:00p LGBTQ+ Meeting BR

Tuesday, 9

2:00p InSpirit Sacred Reading/Scripture
Psalm 116 BR
5:00p AA Big Book Study (Closed Mtg.) BR

Wednesday, 10

9:00a Needles & Pins Craft Group BR
2:00p Operations Council

Thursday, 11

Friday, 12—Office Closed

Saturday, 13

Sunday, 14

10:00a Worship Service SA
11:00a Fellowship Hour KH
11:15a Trustee's Meeting BR

Monday, 15

Tuesday, 16

9:00a Men's Fellowship Breakfast @ George's
2:00p InSpirit Sacred Reading/Scripture
Psalm 69 BR
5:00p AA Big Book Study (Closed Mtg.) BR

Wednesday, 17

9:00a Needles & Pins Craft Group BR
10:00a "Let's Talk" KH

Thursday, 18

Friday, 19—Office Closed

9:00a Juneteenth Labyrinth Walk

Saturday, 20

Sunday 21 – Juneteenth

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

Monday, 22

Tuesday, 23

10:00a Blood Drive KH
2:00p InSpirit Sacred Reading/Scripture
Psalm 13 BR
5:00p AA Big Book Study (Closed Mtg.) BR

Wednesday, 24

9:00a Needles & Pins Craft Group BR

Thursday, 25

Friday, 26 – Office Closed

Saturday, 27

Sunday, 28 - LGBTQ+ Pride Sunday

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

Monday, 29

9:00a Labyrinth Walk/ Stonewall Memorial LB

Tuesday, 30

2:00p InSpirit Sacred Reading/Scripture
Psalm 45 BR
5:00p AA Big Book Study (Closed Mtg.) BR

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; LB labyrinth; MG Memorial Garden

The Church of the Palms

Feet & More Shower Trailer Ministry

June Schedule



- June 4,** 9:00am to 12:00pm - Santa Teresita
14016 N Verbena St. El Mirage
- June 5,** 9:00am to 11:00am - St. John's Lutheran Church
7205 N 51st Ave., Glendale
- June 9,** 9:00am to 1:00pm - Bicentennial Park
16705 N Nash St., Surprise
- June 12,** 12:30pm to 3:30pm - St. John's Lutheran Church
7205 N 51st Ave., Glendale
- June 18,** 9:00am to 12:00pm - Santa Teresita
14016 N Verbena St. El Mirage
- June 19,** 9:00am to 11:00am - St. John's Lutheran Church
7205 N 51st Ave., Glendale
- June 23,** 9:00am to 1:00pm - Bicentennial Park
16705 N Nash St., Surprise
- June 26,** 12:30pm to 3:30 pm - St. John's Lutheran Church
7205 N 51st Ave., Glendale
- June 27,** 4:00pm to 7:00 pm - Amazing Grace Christian
7310 W Camelback, Glendale