

Palm Leaf

Church of the Palms

December 2018

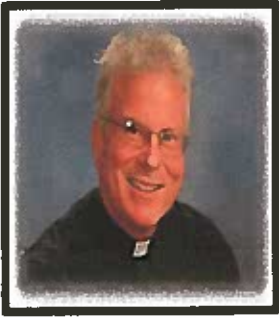
Peace

Within

Around

Throughout





The coming of Advent marks for all of us a season of gift-giving. We like to express our love to family members and friends through material gifts. And we live in a commercialized culture that encourages us to take pleasure in our purchasing. So, we are vulnerable to the preoccupation of collecting things. Our personal effects just seem to close in around us, eventually filling our space, crowding us out.

But as we sing in *“Joy to the World,”* *Advent is a season for every heart to prepare Christ room.* That means removing the clutter from our lives to allow space for Christ’s coming. The season is busy and intense for most of us. Emptying and simplifying strike us as seasonally inappropriate. We think of doing more and more, not less and less.

A spiritual housecleaning complete with rummage sale, recycling, and a trip to the dump, is not an Advent tradition most folks ever consider. But a prayerful assessment of our lives may reveal habits and expectations that no longer fit our deeper yearnings. Just as we give away clothing we have outgrown, we may need to let go of worn-out rituals of how we celebrate Christmas.

How do we do that?

Simplifying our gift-giving patterns may be one way. Finding non-material ways to say “I love you” may be another. Less may be more in the economy of God especially when it comes to making room for Christ. During this season of Advent, do a little housecleaning in the attic and basement of your soul.

Shalom, Pastor Paul Whitlock

MODERATOR’S CORNER

December is such a busy month for many of us. For others, it’s a very lonely and depressing month. We should all be excited to honor the birth of Christ, but so many secular things get in our way. And we may be saints in the making, but we’re still human enough to miss a loved one who isn’t with us, to want to be included at a party, to need a hug, to feel a bit sad because Christmas today is different than the Christmases year ago.



This is my idea: if each person who entertains in any way would invite one person who is all alone as a guest, it would spread the love of Christ. If you don’t entertain, invite one person to lunch or to a movie or for coffee. Invite someone you don’t usually spend time with. Give the gift of time to someone who has too much time alone. And if Christmas is difficult for you, don’t be afraid to tell people. We’re never good at mind reading, and it’s easy to get lost in the shuffle of a busy season.

I would like to wish everyone a Christmas filled with hope, love, and peace. If you need love, give it. If you’ve lost hope, Christmas celebrates the birth of hope. If you seek peace, be a peacemaker. Participate in as many ways as you can. And my hope is that you always remember how you are special, unique, and loved by someone.

Let’s make this Christmas better than any before by being inclusive and kind.

Merry Christmas!
Judy Pinter, Church Moderator

Memories from the Joyce Spaulding Memorial Thanksgiving Feast



LIFELONG LEARNING

We promise a great time at our December 11 Fellowship Breakfast at 8 a.m. You will enjoy the music of the renowned quartet of Pastor Paul, Pastor Jim, Jane Zukowski and Linette Stenberg singing a couple of Christmas songs, and then we will all sing together some of our favorite Christmas carols and songs. Be sure to sign up for this event in the narthex

Lifelong Learning presents a class each Monday (through January 14 with no class on December 24 and 31): Joseph Campbell's "The Power of Myth."

Led by Nick Nichols, will present a portion of the DVD and facilitate discussion
Classes are on Monday's from 10 a.m. until 11:30 a.m.

GRIEF SHARE[®]

After a successful *Surviving the Holidays* seminar, the next 13 week semester of **GriefShare will begin on Friday, January 4, 2019**
Sessions are held in the board room each Friday from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
at the Church of the Palms—Gordy & Mary Funck are the facilitators

Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Isaiah 58:1

From August 26-30, 2018, four members of The Church of The Palms, Pat and John Durbin, Kurt Hoffman, and Beth Malmgren joined with over 100 likeminded individuals to participate in the Faithful Witness at the Border. Participants from seven United Church of Christ Conferences from all the US time zones and several other denominations gathered at Good Shepherd UCC Sahuarita, AZ in conjunction with the Southwest Conference UCC Justice Witness Ministries Global Ministries.

The purpose of the event was to increase understanding of what has happened, what is happening and current issues at the border between AZ and Mexico. This was one of the most intense, stimulating and enlightening events I have been a part of.

We learned of the work of members of the Samaritans of Green Valley, Sahuarita and Tucson and No More Deaths – a humanitarian group from Tucson. These caring people drive through the Aravaca desert searching for immigrants in need of food, water, medical care (many of whom have severe blistered feet); deliver water to fill/refill 50 gallon containers. Location of the water containers are marked by blue flags flying above the location These need to be monitored as the vigilantes and Border Patrol agents frequently shoot holes to empty the water. Many of the members make long treks into the desert carrying 3 or more gallon jugs filled with water to be placed in inconspicuous places. They also drop off food packs and blankets (in the winter). Recently 1000 life straws which filter water for safe drinking have been provided. We met the two asylum seeking families cared for by the Good Shepherd UCC Church. They entered before the rules were changed regarding asylum seekers by this administration.

QUESTION: Is humanitarian aid legal? **ANSWER:** YES – medical aid, a shower, clean clothing and food may be provided and many residents around Aravaca, AZ provide those necessities.

HOWEVER: It is illegal to harbor an undocumented immigrant.

Did you know that while AZ has about 10% of all immigration detainees, 27 other states also have detention centers, and that AZ has over 3000 immigrants on a daily basis? As Bill Lyons, Conference Minister stated “No matter where you are there are border issues- Not just in AZ.”

We learned about streamlining immigrants who have entered or re-entered the US illegally. This process presents a group of 70-80 chosen men and women who are prosecuted all at one time. Because there aren't enough Public Defenders, outside lawyers are hired at \$125-\$160/day (for 3 hours work) to meet the defendants for up to 30 minutes – individually-- prior to court proceedings to get their backgrounds, explain charges, and legal options. Each lawyer has up to 6 cases at a time. In the Tucson Courthouse, we witnessed 78 migrants (men and women) who appeared 7-8 at a time. They no longer had shackles as in the past, but most of them entered with heads bowed and hands behind their back. Most all defendants were advised by their lawyers to plead guilty so that they would receive a misdemeanor charge and a prison sentence of 30-180 days followed by deportation. If they were to plead not guilty they would wait in a detention center maybe for years waiting for a trial. Pleading is more beneficial. Those who are undocumented can't be let out on bail (if funds were available) regardless of how minor the charges. This new procedure of Operation Streamline-Zero Tolerance has increased: court costs, growth of costly private prisons and Border Patrol exponentially.

Prevention through deterrence is not reducing the number of undocumented immigrants from knocking a our door. It is only highlighting the worst of our human nature. The presiding judge met with our group following the hearings and answered our many questions regarding the process. He informed us that **we were responsible for these changes by our votes and we had the power to change/improve the system.** Presentations regarding detention centers in AZ especially for children described appalling circumstances. There is no transparency, teachers are unqualified and there is no oversight.

In Nogales, Mexico we visited the Comedar where the Jesuits, Sisters of the Holy Eucharist, Samaritans and No More Death members provide 2 meals a day, clothing, medical care, phone calls, legal advice, and psychological services. High on a hill entranced by very many and winding steep steps we visited La Roca (El Alberque LaRoca) a migrant shelter run by a small Pentecostal Church.in Nogales. We met the husband and wife who oversee the facility. It is open to ALL migrants with separate facilities for men and women. Rev. Randy Mayer ,and his church of the Good Shepherd were instrumental in providing new mattresses for bunk beds recently The Samaritans of Green Valley offer support for the shelter as well.

The first close view of the WALL runs along the backyard of residents at the bottom of the hill., dividing he 2 cities of Nogales, AZ and Nogales, Mexico It is made of rusted steel tubes reinforced with concrete with steel plates on top. It looms 18-30 feet tall with 4" gaps between the bars. Flood lights loom above it on the US sideand are lit at night. The gaps are wide enough for people on opposite sides of the boarder to hold hands, pass notes to family and friends However, an 8 foot metal mesh was installed behind the Wall on the US side to block these openings No longer is it possible to join hands in love.

We stood on a sidewalk in Nogales where flowers and a cross marking the spot where a border patrol agent or agents shot through the fence in October 2012 killing a 16-year old boy, Jose Antonio Elna Rodriguez. The agents said he had been throwing rocks at them. Witnesses in Mexico dispute this. He was hit by 11 shots in the back. I could not believe a rock cold be thrown that far (across the road and up an embankment and over the fence).

Gathering for communion at the Border Wall – Touching the Wall – Holding hands with others who care – Joining our voices in song and prayer – Wondering how I would feel seeing this Wall every day, flooded with light each night – was moving, thought provoking and enriching.

We joined together at the Border Patrol station with our hand printed signs and again joined voices in song and prayer, demonstrating our desire to change this immoral policy.

Walking through the desert where the feet of migrants have trod was humbling for me. Stopping at the grave site where a newborn died made me ponder. What happened to the mother? Why did she make that long, arduous trek so close to delivery? Was she alone? What did she expect for her future when she arrived at her planned destination? That was just one of many who have died crossing the desert.

Seeing the various personal articles left behind and found by those who search the desert looking to help lost immigrants raised more questions. Who are these people who are willing to risk their lives to find a better life? What would make any one of us leave all we know- family, homes, neighbors for a treacherous journey leading to an unknown result? **People with nothing to lose cannot be deterred!!! They leave to find a better life for themselves and their family!!!!**

When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall do him no wrong. The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you and you shall love him as yourself, ... Leviticus 19:33-34

Beth Malmgren Social Justice Committee

www.facebook.comSWCUCC will provide a short video of the conference.

Also you can read *Detained and Deported* by Margaret Regan in our church library.



Border Wall



Flag to indicate water barrel



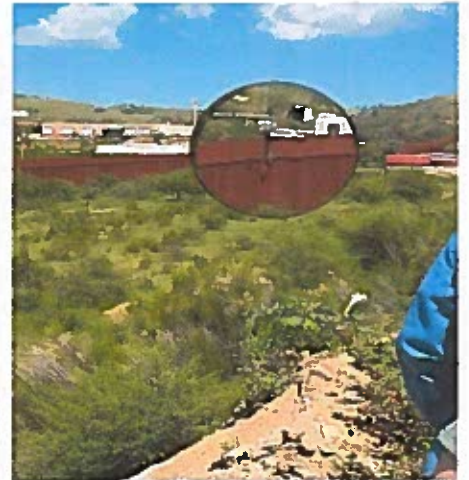
Water barrel—locked



Grave Marker



Grave Marker



Border Crossers



Member of Mission



Rev. Dr. Bill Lyons serving communion

**We Request That You
Call the Office at 623-977-8359 When ...**

- ◆ You feel the church can assist you in any way.
- ◆ You or a member of your family is admitted to the hospital so visits can be arranged and proper people notified.
- ◆ Your class or group plans to meet so that a room can be reserved for you and placed on the church calendar.
- ◆ Your home address or phone number changes so the church records can be amended.
- ◆ You are planning to move-either out of town or locally.

Care Team Brochures

Are located on the main
Bulletin Board in the church
hallway and on the
Information Table.
in the narthex.

Please take one. They have lots
of great resources!!



Jack Evans will be our guide on Friday, December 14th at 9:30 a.m. as we view

THE DEEP BLUE SEA

This destructive love affair set in World War II, features powerful performances by Rachel Weisz and Tom Hiddleston and is directed by the great British filmmaker Terrence Davies.

2019 Week of Prayer

for Christian Unity

January 20th - January 25th

Representatives from ten Sun City congregations have come together to plan the January 20 to 25, 2019 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

With the Graymoor Ecumenical & Religious Institute <https://geii.org/index.html> providing materials and guidance,

these ten churches have been conducting the Week of Prayer in Sun City since 1999. This year's theme has been selected and finds its origins in Deuteronomy. "Justice, Only Justice, You Shall Pursue" (cf. Deuteronomy 16:20) was chosen for its powerful message of promoting truth, equality and unity. This always fragile harmony is today threatened in new ways. Throughout the world, economic growth has been built on a system that has competition at its heart. Corruption in many forms has infected politics and business, often with devastating consequences for the environment. In particular, corruption undermines justice and the implementation of law. Too often those who are supposed to promote justice and protect the weak do the opposite. As a consequence, the gap between the rich and the poor has widened. Meanwhile particular ethnic and religious groups are often associated with wealth in ways that have fed tensions. Throughout the world radicalization that pits one community against another has grown and is exacerbated by the misuse of social media that demonizes particular communities. Christian communities in such an environment become keenly aware that unity is critical in response to the unjust reality. At the same time, confronted by these injustices, we are obliged, as Christians, to examine the ways in which we are complicit. Only by heeding Jesus's prayer "that they all may be one" can we witness to living unity in diversity. It is through our unity in Christ that we will be able to combat injustice and serve the needs of its victims.

Week of Prayer Service Times - 12:00 to 12:30

Fellowship Lunch from 12:30 to 1:00

Schedule -	Mon. Jan 21	Church of the Palms with St Joachim & St Anne (Prayer for justice)
	Tue. Jan 22	St. Elizabeth Seton with First Presbyterian (Prayer for honesty and inclusiveness)
	Wed. Jan 23	Faith Presbyterian with United Church of Sun City (Prayer for the health of the environment and to live more simply)
	Thur. Jan 24	All Saints of the Desert with Shepherd of the Desert (Prayer for the end of exploitation of the poor, women and children)
	Fri. Jan 25	First United Methodist with St Christopher's (Prayer for the hope in Jesus Christ who is the light of the world)

If you have questions please contact Pat & John Durbin at 623.974.8255

Church of the Palms

50th Anniversary Fundraiser Bingo Party

Eighty-five players and helpers enjoyed a fun-filled afternoon including lunch, fellowship, and Bingo, to raise funds for our church's 50th anniversary celebration.

A little over \$1,400 was raised to support the efforts of the committee in its plans for a fabulous year of *celebrating the past and embracing the future*. And of course, 20% of all fundraising efforts of our church go to missions and outreach programs.

A BIG THANK YOU for all those that donated prizes, including flat screen TVs, works of art, gift cards, concert tickets, a weekend in Sedona and a week in Palm Springs. "We need to do this again" was a comment heard many times.

One thing for sure: When Church of the Palms members and friends gather for worship, discipleship or fellowship, great things happen!

Look for other fundraising and fellowship activities planned by the 50th Anniversary Committee.



HOLIDAY COOKIE SALE



**Saturday December 15
10:00 a.m. until Noon**

See the sign-up sheet in the Narthex for the types of cookies you can bake and buy. You can also bake your own favorite cookies if you would like. Bring your baked cookies along with the list of ingredients that you used on Friday, December 14th so that they can be made ready for the sale on Saturday.



DECEMBER DIAPER DRIVE for New Life Shelter

It does seem surprising to come into our church narthex and see a baby's playpen. What is even more surprising and disturbing, however, are the number of infants and small children who find themselves accompanying their parent into a domestic abuse shelter.

Our church, through the Board of Mission and Outreach, has been a long-time supporter of the New Life Shelter for Domestic Violence in Avondale. Over the years we have seen a growing need to provide help for infants and small children living in the shelter.

When asked how our church could be of greatest help at this time, Susan Allen, Volunteer and Donations Coordinator, said "We could really use help with diapers for infants and small children".

Specifically, they need help with baby diapers, sizes 4 and 5. For each of the four Sundays in December there will be a baby's playpen available for you to place baby diapers.

Thank you for helping the





December 2018

Birthdays

Pat Durbin	12/03
Sharon Christenson	12/05
Rhonna Fiihr	12/07
Donald Marselle	12/08
Ruthie Whitlock	12/08
Janet Bozgan	12/09
Roline Baker	12/11
Chris Johnson	12/11
Bonnie Tweedy	12/13
Carol Bryan	12/15
Leonard Silvester	12/15
Glenn Fiihr	12/17
Howard Schenk	12/18
Irene Kozlowski	12/19
Linda Gillis	12/30



SAVE THE DATE

The Board of Lifelong Learning is sponsoring a retreat for area churches

FEBRUARY 22-24 AT COTP

“Our Evolving Story: Integrating Religion and Science”
Sr. Sharon Zayac, OP international speaker on
The New Creation Story

Kay Klinkenborg is chair of this committee.
Contact her to volunteer

816-377-2318 kayklink@yahoo.com

Look for the brochures & flyers along with registration forms in our January Palm Leaf



Inchworms Bible Study

Tuesdays, 10 -11:20 A.M. Guided by Mary Whitlock. We will be inching our way through “How To Read the Bible Today” by N. T. Wright. Join us on Tuesdays for great learning and discussion!



What is Jump Start Bible Study??

WHAT: Fellowship, study and discussion of four Bible passages assigned for the upcoming Sunday’s worship service from Old Testament, Psalms, & New Testament

WHO: Anyone interested in fellowshipping with other Church of the Palms members and friends and growing their faith. No previous experience required...you are welcome no matter where you are on your life’s journey

WHEN: Tuesdays at 3:30 PM

WHERE: Board Room

HOW: Come with your favorite Bible (OT & NT), or pick up one in church library; written scripture references and study material will be provided

BRING: Bring a light snack to enjoy as we get acquainted and fellowship

COME EXPECTING: A blessing...maybe even more than one!!

QUESTIONS? John or Pat Durbin at 623.974.8255

Neuropathy and Pain Support Group

This educational and compassionate group meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month in the Board Room.

The next meeting is

December 20th at 10 a.m.

Scott Patrick leads this group and addresses issues relating to the struggle with Neuropathy and pain in all it forms.

Services in December

Worship Service each week at 10 a.m.

Fellowship Time in King Hall at 11 a.m.

For bus pick-up:

Please Call Mary Kennicott: 623-249-8999
or the church office at 623-977-8359

As we move into the seasons of Advent and Christmas, our over-arching theme for worship will be ***Peace: Within, Around, Throughout***. Each Sunday will follow the traditional themes of **Hope, Peace, Joy, & Love**.

December 2: The First Sunday of Advent: Hope. Pastor Paul will be preaching. Read Luke 21:25-36. Advent traditionally begins with apocalyptic messages. That term means “to uncover” or “reveal.” We must stay awake with hope to uncover peace within, around, and throughout.

December 9: The Second Sunday of Advent: Peace. Pastor Paul will be talking about sometimes needing to stand our ground for there to be peace. Linus Van Pelt will do the honors of reading Luke 2:8-14.

December 16: The Third Sunday of Advent: Joy. The Sanctuary Choir will be leading in worship.

December 23: The Fourth Sunday of Advent: Love. Love came down at Christmas over 2000 years ago! Love continues to come into our lives in so many ways. Love is the gift that keeps on giving. Pastor Jim will preach from Luke 1:39-55.

December 24, 7 p.m.: Christmas Eve. This is a service of communion, candlelight, and carols. Pastor Paul will preach. What will we take from the manger?

December 30: The First Sunday After Christmas. Pastor Jim will preach from Luke 2:41-52. “Where o where has our little boy gone?” Indeed, an interesting question from Mary and Joseph!! But, do we know where Jesus can be found in our lives??

Getting to know you, getting to know all about you. The Church of the Palms family directory will be created in the new year. We have over 70 new members since the last edition intermingled with more than 100 other members. In January digital photos will be taken, addresses updated, birthdays added, and background information placed in an easily updated 3-ring binder. Distribution is targeted for March. Nancy Mueller will coordinate this and seek helpers in December for photography, updating, editing, layout.

If you use Facebook,
you are invited to "like"
The Church of the Palms and
become a friend of
the church.
Photos from events and
outings are reposted there.



Instagram



Check out our Website

www.thepalms.org

We offer:

Sermon Gallery
Paul at the Palms
News and Events
The Palm Leaf Newsletter
Monthly Calendar
General Synod News
Photos
New Member Orientation
Dates

The Church of the Palms
14808 N. Boswell Boulevard,
Sun City, AZ 85351
Phone (623-977-8359)

Winter Office Hours:
Monday-Friday 8am-2pm
Friday 8 a.m. to Noon
Sunday Worship Service 10:00 a.m.
Office e-mail: manager@thepalms.org
Website: www.thepalms.org

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



Drawn together by the Holy Spirit, we are a
distinct and diverse community of Christians
that come together as one church, joining faith
and action.

In covenant with the church in all of its
settings, we serve God in the
co-creation of a just and sustainable world as
made manifest in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

"That they may all be one," Jesus, speaking in
prayer. —John 17:21

Palm Leaf is a monthly newsletter from the
Church of the Palms that makes it easy for you to
keep up with opportunities, events, and friends
at church.

Articles deadline: 15th of each month

You may submit an article or information for an
article by:

Email (manager@thepalms.org)
Phone (623-977-8359),
Or drop it off at the church.

Office Staff:

Pastor Paul Whitlock, Senior Minister
Jim Alexander, Associate Pastor

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

DECEMBER 2018

in The Church of the Palms UCC Sun City, AZ

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<p>2 First Sunday in Advent HOPE 8:30AM Sunday Discussion 9:15 Choir Warm-up (NIR) 10 Worship /Communion (SA) 11 Fellowship (KII)</p>	<p>3 10AM Lifelong Learning</p>	<p>4 10AM "Inchworms" 11:30 Cosmic Christians 3:30PM "Jump" Start Bible Study 3:30 Handbell Rehearsal (BR)</p>	<p>5 9AM Service Project Craft Group</p>	<p>6 1:00PM Worship & Fine Arts (BR) 2:30PM Choir Rehearsal (NIR)</p>	<p>7 9:30AM Social Justice Action Team (BR) 1-3PM GriefShare</p>	<p>1 9AM Communion Prep 9AM Church Decorating 12:30 Lunch with a Bunch Valley Women's Ensemble Concert</p>
<p>9 Second Sunday in Advent PEACE 8:30AM Sunday Discussion 9:15 Choir Warm-up (NIR) 10 Worship (SA) 11 Fellowship (KH)</p>	<p>10 10AM Lifelong Learning 3PM Board of Trustees (BR)</p>	<p>11 8AM Fellowship Breakfast 9 Board of Stewards (KH) 10 "Inchworms" 11:30 Cosmic Christians 3:30PM "Jump" Start 3:30 Handbell Rehearsal (BR)</p>	<p>12 9AM Service Project Craft Group (BR) 9AM Board of Mission & Outreach (KH) 10 Board of Evangelism (CP)</p>	<p>13 2:30PM Choir Rehearsal 11:30 Women's Friendship Group Luncheon at JMichaels</p>	<p>14 9:30 AM Justice Team 9:30 AM Pages to Projector Jack Evans Presents: The Deep Blue Sea 12 Bridge Group</p>	<p>15 10:00AM Cookie Sale 1:00PM Church Council</p>
<p>16 Third Sunday in Advent JOY 8:30AM Sunday Discussion (KII) 9:15 Choir Warm-up (NIR) 10 Worship (SA) <i>Christmas Musical</i> 11 Fellowship (KII)</p>	<p>17 10AM Lifelong Learning</p>	<p>18 10AM "Inchworms" 11:30 "Cosmic" Christians 3:30PM "Jump" Start 3:30 Handbell Rehearsal (BR)</p>	<p>19 9AM Service Project Craft Group (BR)</p>	<p>20 10AM Neuropathy Support Group 2:30PM Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>
<p>23 Fourth Sunday in Advent LOVE 8:30AM Sunday Discussion (KH) 9:15 Choir Warm-up (NIR) 10 Worship (SA)</p>	<p>24 <i>Christmas Eve Candle Lighting Service</i> 7PM</p>	<p>25 <i>Office Closed</i> MERRY CHRISTMAS!</p>	<p>26 <i>Office Closed</i> MERRY CHRISTMAS</p>	<p>27 9AM Board of Life Long Learning No Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>
<p>30 8:30AM Sunday Discussion (KII) 9:15 Choir Warm-up (NIR) 10 Worship (SA)</p>	<p>31</p>					

Happy New Year!!