



Church of the Palms
 United Church of Christ
 Sun City, AZ
www.thepalms.org

Congregation for Mental Wellness

Welcoming | Inclusive
 Supportive | Engaged

Important Phone Numbers

National Alliance on Mental Illness Help Line
 1-800-950-6264 <https://www.nami.org/help>
 Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800.273.TALK
 Veteran's Crisis Line 800.273.8255 *press 1*
 Pastoral Care—Pastor Jim Alexander
 623.792.5295

The Church of the Palms' W.I.S.E. focus will be combined for November and December. Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's will be experienced differently than ever before in our lifetime because of COVID 19, traveling restrictions, sizes of groups recommended for safety. Amid celebrations and losses, we all come with anticipation and hopes of something to touch our souls as only the Divine can.

"PROMISES" and reminders of God's continued presence can comfort and embolden our choices of how to respond to the myriad of emotions that holidays bring. Most of us own our nostalgic tendencies during this season. That brings sorrow and joyful memories. So let's go exploring about God's "PROMISES" for eight weeks.

Please read the overview and scripture ties for each week and pray that Emmanuel will open you to new ways of celebrating the holidays of 2020. God *is* with you!

M is for Mercy: "We never walk where Jesus hasn't already walked." —Hebrews 2:18; 4:15; 12:3

Mercy is the verb of God's promise to us. The Divine is full of compassion and a profound comforter at times of need. One of the hardest tasks I face is "showing myself mercy and compassion." I am harder on myself than others are on me. I get my expectations running out of shoulds and coulds instead of "what would God have me do?" Just because I have a set of skills does not mean that I am being called to use all of them all the time. God's mercy comes in a thousand ways; and you can identify many ways God has shown you mercy. I will share a personal one: I played the piano professionally since the age of 15. I have played for churches, choirs, professional signers, vocal contestants, and community chorales. After 48 years, I found myself resenting vocalists handing me a piece to sight read, in 5 sharps, and 1/2 hour to prepare. Tired of being at public events and asked on the spot to play for a large crowd or gathering. I struggled with "my gift" and why I felt angry. One evening in prayer time, it was clear to me: "Kay, just because you have had this talent does not mean there is a 'should.'" Listen to what your heart is telling you, balancing your talents is the most important." It is about listening to my conversations with God and what is God's response of mercy to my quest? What is God's response of mercy to my "should?"

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A RITUAL TO GUIDE US THROUGH THESE HOLIDAYS

Kay Klinkenborg offered a ritual to assist us during these unusual holidays at the Nov. 10 Tuesday Breakfast in Your PJs. This ritual acknowledges God is the ultimate "LIGHT" and is never absent from us, even when we can't see it or feel God's presence.

She suggested each home make an "altar" for "HONORING AND MEMORIAL." An altar is a place to honor, to have a place to focus thoughts, a place you go with intention. Chose a location: center of dining room table, end table, any room in your home. You can place the items on the table, or a tray or plate.

Use two battery-operated candles or tealights to place on your altar: one to honor those who cannot be physically present with you, the second to Memorialize the one(s) you have lost this year or in past years.

Select photos, ornaments, mementos, any item that speaks to you of these persons in your life. Let your creativity flow. Have a small tablet or piece of paper and pen on which to write a memory, gratitude, etc. Each message you capture will be a blessing. Choose to pause at the altar as you feel led — once a week, daily, or particularly on the holiday. Remember to "temper," as Shea Darian has taught us in our grief times; pace yourself, don't make this a compulsion. Some questions to consider during this blessing time at the altar:

What are memories that are special? What ways did this person bring light to my life? What blessings do I wish to send them? What blessing have I received from them?

There are 2 (two) free tealights for each household in the church office. They are LED battery operated. You may pick them up Monday-Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. They are the gift of Life Long Learning Board and the Care Team of the Church of the Palms.