

December 3, 2023



Bloom in the Desert Ministries (Bloom) is a United Church of Christ (UCC) that had Methodist

beginnings. This liberal Protestant church was born in 2002, as an independent ministry in collaboration with Methodist organizations seeking to start and promote inclusive Christian ministries. Sunday worship began on March 9, 2003. The fledgling congregation decided in 2004 to pursue standing in the UCC, which was established by vote of the Eastern Association of the Southern California Nevada Conference of the UCC on October 29, 2005, welcoming Bloom as a dual covenant, peace, and justice congregation. Bloom is a member of the UCC Open and Affirming Coalition and the Reconciling Ministries Network (Methodist). Bloom is governed congregationally according to our unique bylaws. All Bloom members and friends are ministers in our faith. Our Open Leadership Team and congregation meetings provide leadership and decision making to empower our vision, mission, and core values.

Our Vision

Bloom chooses to build a loving, safe, inclusive faith community that is intellectually challenging, emotionally supportive and filled with the strength, integrity, and social responsibility that spirituality inspires.

Our Mission

Guided by teachings of Jesus Christ, Bloom is a community of believers who strive to uplift and heal one another. We gather to worship God, witness our faith in the living of our lives and uphold one another in Christian living. United in our diversity we are inclusive and embracing. We agitate for God's peace and justice in our community and around the world.

Our Core Values

We are a people of God's extravagant welcome. We are a people of covenant. We work toward a just and loving world through service and generosity. We listen for the still-speaking God. We encourage a life of inquisitive and thoughtful searching. We are grounded by Christian faithfulness. We celebrate the joy in life.

Sunday Worship 10 am

Demuth Community Center — 3601 E. Mesquite Avenue, Palm Springs, CA 92264

Lynda Toland, Moderator — 503-789-8743 — moderator@bloominthedesert.org

On-Call Pastoral Care — Rev. Ron Lang — 951—663-5237 — rflangX25@gmail.com

Bill Wallace, Administrative Assistant — adminassitant@bloominthedesert.org

Church Office is located at 400 South El Cielo, Suite G, Palm Springs, CA 92262

760-327-3802 - www.bloominthedesert.org - info@bloominthedesert.org



Spare Change Jar and Hospitality Basket

Perhaps you've wondered about these two items on the hospitality table nestled among the food items after morning worship. They have two purposes and are both opportunities for your support.

The Spare Change Jar helps fund two Social Action and Missions projects. First, the back-toschool backpacks with school supplies we deliver to area elementary schools in August. Second, the Christmastime \$100 gift cards we distribute to local schools' administrative staff to give to students' families who are struggling. Don't carry change or dollars? You can also give online to the spare change jar via the Bloom homepage Donate tab.

The Hospitality Basket helps pay for the sundry expenses of plates, cups, cutlery and coffee we use during hospitality hour. Your donations of physical goods are also welcome.



Bloom in the Desert Ministries United Church of Christ Palm Springs, CA

Sunday after World AIDS Day First Sunday of Advent Communion Sunday ~Hope~ December 3, 2023

For Facebook check-ins, etc., the Demuth Community Center - Wi-Fi password is: D3muthP@rk

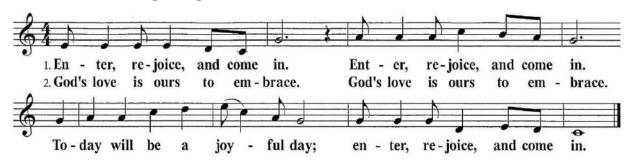
Advent begins the new church year in the Western tradition, running four Sundays prior to Christmas Eve. The traditional color of Advent is purple, the color of royalty, to welcome the Advent of the promised Sovereign, Jesus, as the "Word made flesh," building a home among us.

* Please rise as you are able in body and spirit.

9:50am Pre-Service Music

"Christmas Medley" arr. by Mark Hayes

10:00am Gathering Song



Welcome and News of the Congregation

Ray Stimson, Worship Leader

Malcolm Swan, piano

When I look around, I see shadows of hunger. So many people in this city and around the world will go to bed hungry tonight...

When I look around, I see shadows of injustice, the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer, everyone saying, "Buy, buy, buy!" - and someone somewhere will fall asleep under a bridge tonight...

In the face of hunger, we light a candle of hope...

In the face of injustice, in the face of despair, we light a candle of hope...

Let the light from this candle say to all that God's hope is coming on earth as it already is in heaven.

Friends, be not afraid, God's hope is at hand!

Music for Centering "Wonderful Peace"

Malcolm Swan, piano

Bill Wallace

* Call to Worship

As a new year of storytelling begins, we bring our individual stories as well.

Our stories combine with ancient words to create a love continuum.

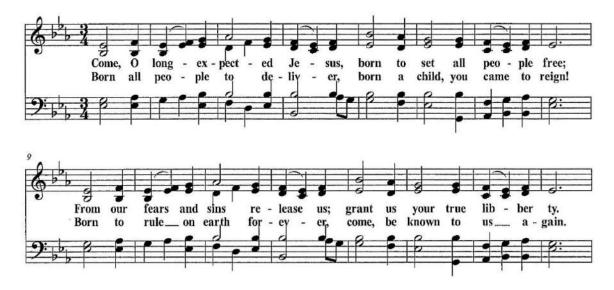
Why is it good for us to gather like this?

We are encouraged to embody the divine promise; we choose hope and healing to soothe hurt and frustration. As co-creators, God and our friends reach to us offering good sources of life and love.

Aloha, Shalom, Salaam, Vrede, Myr, Ping-an, Paz, Peace. Amen.

* Opening Hymn

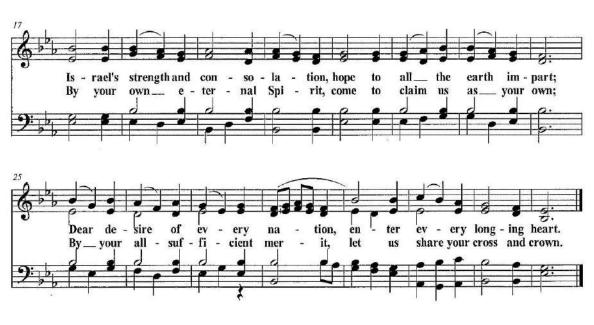
"Come, O Long Expected Jesus"



George and Jacquie Spencer

Lighting the Advent Candle

Hope



In Faith We Open Our Hearts to Ministry

Prayer for Good and Growth

This Sunday after World AIDS Day, we pray this National Council of Churches' Prayer for Social and Economic Justice in the HIV/AIDS Era:

God of liberation and justice, Defender of the poor and marginalized, we seek Your guidance. Give us the vision and the confidence to become prophets when resources are looted.

Help us hear the cry of the widows. Help us feed the orphans. Help us denounce injustice by the powerful.

Stimulate our courage to demand drugs for the sick and care for the abandoned. Inspire us to denounce wastefulness by the affluent.

Forgive us when we are silenced by fear. Forgive our mindless or intentional complicity. Forgive our societies when we deal lightly with the wounds of persons living with HIV/AIDS.

Forgive all who offer naïve or artificial solutions. Empower us to tackle corrupt systems. Make us instruments of Your peace. Make us agents of Your transformation... (adapted) Our Silent Prayers (These intentional moments of silence are included in worship to enable minds to settle, then move past the distraction of internal chatter, to connect actively with God. A few deep breaths may help make the connection. Relax, and embrace a spiritual dimension.)

Eternal Source of creation and love, receive now our sincere and silent prayers.

~ Silence ~

To all our silent prayers let the people say amen.

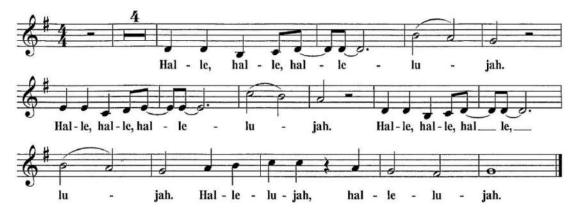
Amen.

Words of Encouragement

Nothing separates us from God's love. We are beloved in community. Amen. Let us now receive the Word.

Sung Response

Halle, Halle, Hallelujah!



The Word Informs Our Living with Grace and Power

Hebrew Scripture Reading

Isaiah 64:1-9

Rich Fluechtling

O, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would shake before you.

As fire kindles the brushwood and the fire makes water boil, make your Name known to your adversaries, and let the nations tremble before you!

When you did awesome things that we could not have expected, you came down, and the mountains guaked in your presence!

no eye has ever	ear has ever been heard, seen any God but you those who wait for you!	
that we would You are angry	l find us doing right, be mindful of you in our ways! because we are sinful; o long—how can we be saved?	
We have all wi	nclean and soiled, deeds are polluted. thered like leaves, urries us away like the wind.	
for you hid you	ho clings to you,	
we are the clay	other and father, YHWH; and you are the potter, york of your hands.	
	er go beyond measure, emember our sins forever, our people.	~Inclusive Bible Version

* Gospel Reading

Mark 13:24-37

Mindy Harrington

"But in those days, after that time of distress, the sun will be darkened, the moon will lose its brightness, the stars will fall from the sky and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Promised One coming in the clouds with great power and glory; then the angels will be sent to gather the chosen from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

"Take the fig tree as a parable: as soon as its twigs grow supple and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, know that the Promised One is near, right at the door. The truth is, before this generation has passed away, all these things will have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

"But as for that day or hour, nobody knows it—neither the angels of heaven, nor the Only Begotten— no one but Abba God. Be constantly on the watch! Stay awake! You do not know when the appointed time will come.

"It is like people traveling abroad. They leave their home and put the workers in charge, each with a certain task, and those who watch at the front gate are ordered to stay on the alert. So stay alert! You do not know when the owner of the house is coming, whether at dusk, at midnight, when the cock crows or at early dawn. Do not let the owner come suddenly and catch you asleep. What I say to you I say to all stay alert!" ~Inclusive Bible Version

Here ends the reading of the Gospel. This is the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

The Rev'd Tim Rogers is a transplant to the desert from Boston, MA. He has a love of music and is a member of The Palm Springs Gay Men's Chorus. Tim has worked for over 20 years as an ordained Episcopal priest in parish, hospital, and hospice settings. Tim is a former staff member of Easton Mountain Gay Men's Retreat Center in upstate New York. He is currently a Clinical Trainee as a Marriage and Family Therapist at The Center, here in Palm Springs. Tim has worked for the empowerment and integration of body, mind, and spirit of the LGBTQ+ communities for most of his adult life. Tim is very excited to be working at The Center especially at this critical time in the world.

Commentary

Rev'd. Tim Rogers

Offering our Prayer Concerns, and Joys and Thanksgivings

Concerns:

Ray Stimson, Worship Leader

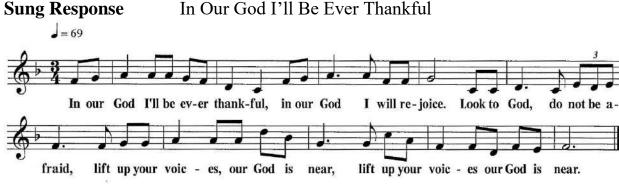
Keep watch, dear God, with all who work, or watch, or weep this day. Tend the sick, give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake.

God, receive our prayer."

Joys and Thanksgivings:

Your hand is open wide to satisfy the needs of all creation. Keep us always thankful for your loving providence and help us be faithful stewards of your good and abundant gifts.

"God, receive our prayer."



Words by Community of Taizé, Music by Jacques Berthier, adapted.

Ministry of Generosity — Expressing God's Love and Empowering Good Works

Our tithes and offerings are an expression of our hearts and our discipleship.

--Checks should be made out to "Bloom in the Desert Ministries." Checks and cash in envelopes with identification are recorded for your year-end convenience. **Online giving is available and easy!** Go to: <u>www.bloominthedesert.org</u> and click on the Donate tab. Thank you.

Offertory-Meditation Music "The Shepherd's Farewell"



Malcolm Swan, piano

Mindy Harrington

Presentation of Offerings and Prayer of Dedication

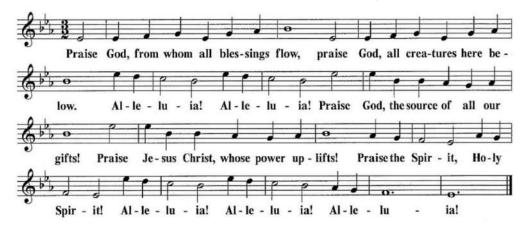
God of unchanging truth, your promise is eternal, your benevolent care spans the ages. We come with our gifts to be molded in accordance with your purposes. We offer ourselves to be shaped by your will. Fill us with wisdom and make us vessels of your truth. Make all that we do an outpouring of your goodness, spreading compassion on the afflicted and care to all who may be in need. Amen.

~James G Kirk, "When We Gather - A Book of Prayers for Worship"

(Please rise, as you are able, in celebration, as we sing the Doxology.)

* Doxology

Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow



The Great Thanksgiving

God is with you. And also with you.

Rev'd Tim Rogers

Let us lift our hearts.

We lift them to our God.

Let us give thanks and praise.

This is a good and joyful thing to do.

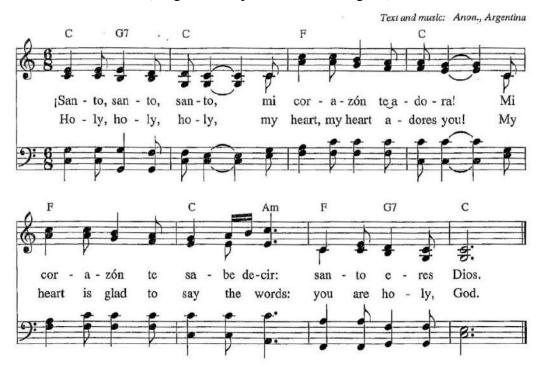
<u>Mindy Harrington</u>: It is a right and good and joyful thing, always and everywhere, to give you praise, all-loving God, creator of energy and matter, heaven and earth. Long ago, you renewed your rainbow covenant with every living creature by entering our realm in the person of Jesus. He gave us your unconditional love and this mandate:

I give you a new commandment: Love one another. And you're to love one another the way I have loved you. This is how all will know that you're my disciples: that you truly love one another."

Therefore, we celebrate you, joining our voices with the wind and streams, the animals and flowers, the living and the dead, the stars, and the planets and all the company of creation, who forever sing of their devotion to your love and glory:

All sing.

Santo, Santo, Santo!



(Sing first in Spanish, then in English)

Bill Wallace: We remember that on the night before Jesus was betrayed by one whom he loved, and killed by ones who feared him, he sat at table with his friends, women and men and children, sharing the feast of the Passover, which is the celebration of the liberation of God's people. Remembering God's power, Jesus took bread, and after he had given thanks and blessed it, he broke it saying,

"This is my work and my life, for you and with you. Take it all of you, and do this remembering me."

<u>Mindy Harrington</u>: After the meal Jesus took the Elijah Cup, the cup traditionally reserved for the Holy One to come. But instead of waiting, Jesus passed it to them as it is now being passed on to us, and he said,

"This is the cup of the new covenant. It is the cup of justice and peace poured out for all. Drink of it all of you and do this remembering me."

Bill Wallace: Each time that we break bread together we participate in the Body of the Risen Christ, for we are the Body of the Risen Christ. And each time we share this cup we participate in the New Community, for we are God's hope of the New Community. For this, we turn to you for blessing:

Pour out your Spirit on us and these gifts of grain and grape, so in this sharing we recognize Christ in our midst. This offering of praise and thanksgiving is an offering of us to you. Hasten the day when the prophets' dreams come to pass: when justice rolls down like waters and nations no longer threaten each other, neither shall they learn war any more. This we pray by the authority of Jesus and in your holy grace. Amen.

Communion Invitation

These are the gifts of God for the people of God. This is bread and beverage for the journey. In this church community, we share an inclusive communion, which means you need not be a member of this congregation or any community of faith to join us at the table. We believe Jesus welcomed everyone present. We do this in remembrance of him. We do this historically... globally... personally.... For we believe Christ is the host. Christ sets the table and Christ welcomes all. Likewise, no one is required by the host to come forward. If you wish to remain in your seat, you are welcome to relax and enjoy the music. If you wish to be served at your seat, please raise your hand as the line ends, so the servers will come to you. Now, let all who wish to come, come, for God's table is ready.

(After a moment, ushers will invite you to move forward for Communion.)

Communion Music

"Song of Mary"

Malcolm Swan, piano

Rev'd Tim Rogers

*Prayer of Jesus (Please join hands)

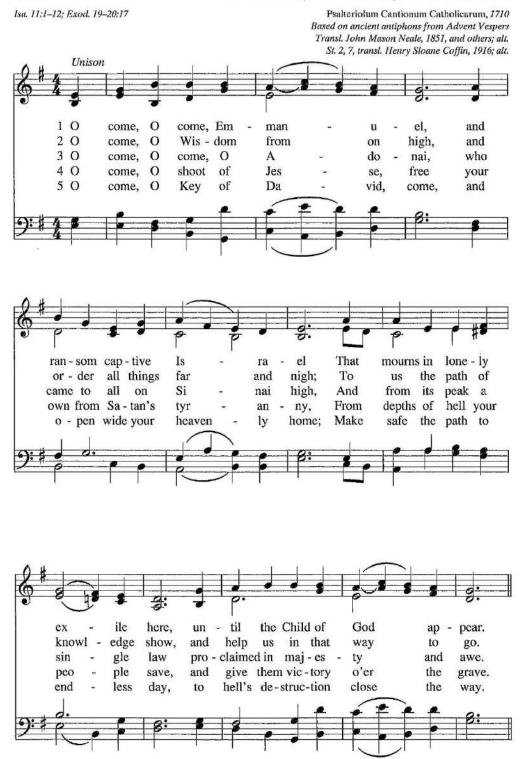
Our Father (Eternal Source/Mother/Creator/Parent) in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom (Kin-dom/realm/dream), come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses (sins/debts), as we forgive those who trespass against us (sin against us/our debtors). And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For yours is the kingdom (Kin-dom/realm/dream), and the power, and the glory forever. Amen. (Based on Matthew 6:9-13 NRSV)

Rev'd Tim

* Sending Hymn Verses 1, 2, 6, 7

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O Come, O Come, Emmanuel





Benediction and Blessing

Rev'd Tim Rogers

As this worship gathering ends, our service begins. What does God need from us? "Simply do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God."

May YHWH bless you and keep you!

May YHWH's face shine upon you and be gracious to you!

May YHWH look kindly upon you and give you peace!

(The Priestly Blessing, Numbers 6:24-26)

My dear friends in faith, will you go into your worlds to be people of God in Christ's name? **We will. Amen!**

Passing of the Peace

Let us safely offer one another signs of grace and peace and go in peace. Amen.

Postlude

"Joy to the World"

Malcolm Swan, piano

-- The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation by Priests for Equality and the Revised Common

Lectionary are the usual references for Sunday morning scripture readings.

--Liturgy and prayers are original, sourced, and often adapted.

Christmas Medley, arr. by Mark Hayes

Wonderful Peace, composed by Gustafson Nordquist

The Shepherd's Farewell, composed by Hector Berlioz

Song of Mary, by Mark Hayes

Joy to the World, by Handel

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Bloom Happenings This Week							
Monday Dec. 4	Tuesday Dec. 5	Wednesday Dec. 6	Thursday Dec. 7	Friday Dec. 8	Saturday Dec. 9	Sunday Dec. 10	
10:30am- 1:00pm Lunch for our unhoused neighbors served at United Methodist	10:30am- 1:00pm Lunch for our unhoused neighbors served at United Methodist 6:00pm Book Group on Zoom	10:45am – 1:00pm Lunch served at St. Paul's Episcopal	6:00pm BibleBites on Zoom	4:00pm Women of Bloom Zoom Happy Hour		10:00 am Sunday Service at Demuth and on Facebook Live	

Congregational Life Announcements

--A warm welcome and thank you to Malcolm Swan, piano, for sharing his musical talents with us today.

--Thank you to Bill Wallace, Rich Fluechtling and Mindy Harrington, for serving as readers for today's service, and to Ray Stimson for serving as worship leader. Special thanks to Rev'd Tim Rogers for presenting our commentary and leading our Great Thanksgiving along with Bill Wallace and Mindy Harrington.

--Thank you to Jackson Enzler for handling the A/V technical aspects for today's service.

Thank you also to our ushers, Megan and Jack Cassette, for welcoming us this morning.

--Flowers on the Worship Center, symbolic of the living Christ, are offered to the glory of God by **Rich Fluechtling** in honor of World AIDS Day.

--Those wishing to donate flowers may contact Lynda Toland at 503-789-8743 for assistance.

Last Week's Participation

--Souls Present at Demuth: 47 --Children: 0 --First Timers: 1 --- Facebook Live Views: 15 -Facebook Total Views: 100 --YouTube Views: 12

Sunday Offerings

Tithes, Offerings, and Participation: Offering, online, by mail and text: \$3,688 Electronic Giving: \$1,408 Permanence Fund: \$0 Cumulative: \$321,759 Spare Change/Gift Cards \$300 Cumulative: \$1,050 (Gift card donations must be received by today for this season) --Please sign up for Ralph's Community Rewards. Choose Bloom in the Desert Ministries (Ralphs #PG245.) as your designated charity to benefit from a small percentage of your purchase totals. Every little bit helps!

<u>Electronic giving is easy! Scan this QR code for Bloom's mobile-friendly</u> online giving page or visit www.bloominthedesert.org/donateparticipate.



Ministries of Leadership and Support

--Open Leadership Meetings are typically the second Wednesday, 6:30-8:00pm PDT. The next hybrid meeting will be December13 at 6:30pm PDT in the church office and on Zoom. All are welcome with a voice. Bloom members have a vote. Contact Lynda Toland to receive the Zoom Invitation.

--Congregation meetings are in February, May, and October, and special meetings as called. The next congregation meeting is February 16 after church in the Hospitality Room and on Zoom.

Church Growth and New Member Involvement Ministry

--If you are interested in making a covenant as a member or associate member with Bloom in the Desert Ministries UCC, please contact John DiNapoli, <u>dinoinps@gmail.com</u> or Bill Wallace at adminassistant@bloominthedesert.org.

--For more information on the United Church of Christ, visit www.ucc.org.

--Persons seeking Christian Baptism please call 760-327-3802 for pastoral response.

Nurture and Community Life Ministry

--We Care: If you know of someone in the hospital, or who might enjoy a pastoral call, including yourself, please call the **church office** at **760 327-3802** and leave a message.

Education Ministry

--BibleBites- Thursdays, at 6pm on Zoom. Rev. Shelly Alexa Somerville, a Bloom member, will be facilitating the study of the Gospel of John.

--Bloom Book Club-. The group will meet this Tuesday at 6pm on Zoom. We will then be on holiday break until January 9th. We are reading "How to Begin When Your World is Ending: A Spiritual Field Guide to Joy Despite Everything" by Rev Molly Baskett. For information or to receive the Zoom link, contact Gary Lange at <u>GaryLange13@gmail.com</u>.

Social Action and Missions Ministry

--Lunch Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays: Come serve lunch at the United Methodist Church of Palm Springs on Mondays and Tuesdays, located at 1555 E. Alejo Rd, Palm Springs 10:30 am– 1:00 pm PDT. On Wednesdays, lunch is served at St. Paul's Episcopal Church at 125 W El Alameda, Palm Springs 10:45 am-1 pm. Contact Jon Miller at jmiller.ps@icloud.com.

Our focused ministries include:

--School children's benevolence – backpacks, church camp, and Christmas gift cards.

--Relieving food insecurity – Lunch Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, food bank support.

- --National church's wider mission "5 for 5" UCC mission offerings, disaster relief.
- --Spiritual and personal development worship, music, bible study, book clubs, lending library.

--Loving presence -- birthday/anniversary cards, eyeglasses recycling, Us Plus local outreach.

--For peace action and social justice email alerts, sign up with Jon Miller at jmiller.ps@icloud.com.

Large-print bulletins are available for your convenience.

You are welcome to take this bulletin with you for reflection or leave it with the ushers for recycling. God wants you to think for yourself and live for others.

Bathrooms are located through the double glass doors and to the left.