



**Bloom**  
in the  
**Desert**  
Ministries



December 10, 2023

# ***Welcome***

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](mailto:moderator@bloominthedesert.org)**

**On-Call Pastoral Care — Rev. Ron Lang — 951—663-5237 — [rflangX25@gmail.com](mailto:rflangX25@gmail.com)**

**Bill Wallace, Administrative Assistant — [adminassitant@bloominthedesert.org](mailto:adminassitant@bloominthedesert.org)**

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

**760-327-3802 — [www.bloominthedesert.org](http://www.bloominthedesert.org) — [info@bloominthedesert.org](mailto: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-to-school 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.



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

Second Sunday of Advent  
~Peace~  
December 10, 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**

Dr. Denis Moreen, piano

“Christmas Day, Choral Fantasy on Old Carols” by Gustav Holst (1910)

**10:00am Gathering Song**

1. En - ter, re-joice, and come in.      Ent - er, re-joice, and come in.  
2. God's love is ours to em - brace.      God's love is ours to em - brace.

To - day will be a joy - ful day;      en - ter, re-joice, and come in.

**Welcome and News of the Congregation**

Ray Stimson, Worship Leader

## Lighting the Advent Candle

Peace

Rev. Doug and John Holder

Because of war, because of violence in our communities, because there is still so much unrest in Israel, Palestine, Ukraine and Russia, we light a candle of peace...

**Because hatred is still so strong, because so many swords have not yet been beaten into plowshares, we light a candle of peace...**

*(Light the second candle in your Advent wreath.)*

May the light from this candle overwhelm the world.

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

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

## Music for Centering

"Pie Jesu" by Andrew Lloyd Webber (1985)

Dr. Denis Moreen, piano

## \* Call to Worship

Linda Lang

"Peace . . ." The angels said and our Christ announced.

**But peace is as much a task as a gift.**

When we become calm as earth, fluid as water, and blazing as fire; we will rise to the task of peacemaking. And all flesh will see it together.

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

## \* Opening Hymn

### We Hail You God's Anointed

104

*James Montgomery, 1821; alt.*

*Ps. 72*

1 We hail you God's a - nointed, the long - a - wait - ed One!  
2 You shall come down like show - ers up - on the fruit - ful earth;  
3 The wise shall bow be - fore you and gold and in - cense bring;  
4 O'er ev - ery foe vic - to - rious, you on your throne shall rest;

Hail in the time ap - point - ed, your reign on earth be - gun!  
and joy and hope, like flow - ers, spring in your path to birth.  
all na - tions shall a - dore you, and praise all peo - ples sing;  
from age to age more glo - rious, all - bless - ing and all - blessed:

You come to break op - pres - sion, to set the cap - tive free;  
 Be - fore you on the moun - tains shall peace, the her - ald, go,  
 To you shall prayer un - ceas - ing and dai - ly vows be said,  
 The tide of time shall nev - er your cov - e - nant re - move;

to take a - way trans - gres - sion, and rule in eq - ui - ty.  
 and righ - teous - ness, in foun - tains, from hill to val - ley flow.  
 your realm is still in - creas - ing, with you, O Christ, as head.  
 your name shall stand for - ev - er, your change-less name of Love.

*Written as a Christmas hymn for the Moravian settlement in Yorkshire, England, this hymn has enjoyed widespread popularity from the beginning. It is characteristic of Montgomery's deep faith and passion for social justice.*

Tune: ELLACOMBE C.M.D.  
 Gesangbuch der herzoglichen Wirttembergischen katholischen Hofkapelle, 1784

## In Faith We Open Our Hearts to Ministry

### Prayer for Good and Growth

On this Advent Sunday dedicated to peace, we pray together for Peace:

**God in all goodness, our eternal safe space, your will is for the lightness of peace to shine everywhere. Make strong all who hope and strive for peace with justice.**

We pray that humankind will make peace and justice the will of the nations.

**Inspire this Body of Christ to take actions big and small to make peace.**

Inspire the hearts and minds of people to seek:

**Peace not war, common good over competitive domination, justice instead of greatness.**

Enable us to share your peace, which passes understanding, with all on Earth near and far, so love and harmony may inhabit every life.

**We want all in the world to know happiness and live in dignity as God's creation.**

When that happens, people will rejoice in your pleasure.

**United in diversity, we see the beauty and value of all lives in the peaceable realm.**

**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 love and creativity, receive now our sincere and silent prayers.

~ Silence ~

To all our silent prayers let the people say amen.

**Amen.**

### Words of Encouragement

“The crooked will be made straight and the rough places smooth.  
All humanity will see God’s salvation.”

Luke 3:5b-6 NRSV

**Amen. Let us now receive the Word.**

### Sung Response

### Halle, Halle, Hallelujah!

Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah.  
Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le,  
lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah.

## The Word Informs Our Living with Grace and Power

### Hebrew Scripture Reading

Psalms 85:1-2,8-13

Steven Moore

YHWH, favor your land once again  
and restore the fortunes of Israel;

forgive the guilt of your people  
and cover all their sins.

I will listen to what you have to say, YHWH—  
a voice that speaks of peace,  
peace for your people and your friends  
so long as they don't return to their folly.

Your salvation is near for those who revere you  
and your glory will dwell in our land.



Love and faithfulness have met;  
justice and peace have embraced.

Fidelity will sprout from the earth  
and justice will lean down from heaven.

YHWH will give us what is good,  
and our land will yield its harvest.

Justice will march before you, YHWH,  
and peace will prepare the way for your steps.

~Inclusive Bible Version

### ✧ Gospel Reading

Mark 1:1-8

Carl Toland

Here begins the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God: as it was written in Isaiah the prophet;

“I send my messenger before you  
to prepare your way,  
a herald’s voice in the desert crying,  
‘Make ready the way of our God.  
Clear a straight path.’”

And so, John the Baptizer appeared in the desert, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to John and were baptized by him in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins. John was clothed in camel’s hair and wore a leather belt around his waist, and he ate nothing but grasshoppers and wild honey.

In the course of his preaching, John said, “One more powerful than I is to come after me. I am not fit to stoop and untie his sandal straps. I have baptized you with water, but the One to come with baptize you in the Holy Spirit.”

~Inclusive Bible Version

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

**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

### Commentary

Rev’d. Tim Rogers

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.

\* Hymn of Response

210

Toda la Tierra  
(All Earth Is Waiting)

*Unísono (Unison)*

1. To - da la tie - rra es - pe - ra al Sal - va - dor  
2. Di - ce el pro - fe - ta al pue - blo de Is - ra - el:

1. All earth is wait - ing to see the Prom - ised One,  
2. Thus says the proph - et to those of Is - ra - el,

y el sur - co a - bier - to, la o - bra del Se - ñor; es el  
"De ma - dre vir - gen ya vie - ne Em - ma - nuel", se - rá

and the o - pen fur - rows, the sow - ing of the Lord. All the  
"A vir - gin moth - er will bear Em - man - u - el," for his

mun - do que lu - cha por la li - ber - tad, re -  
"Dios con no - so - tros", her - ma - no se - rá, con

world, bound and strug - gling, seeks true lib - er - ty; it  
name is "God with us," our broth - er shall be, with

WORDS: Catalanian text by Alberto Taulè, 1972; English trans. by Gertrude C. Suppe, 1987 (Is. 40:3-5)  
MUSIC: Alberto Taulè, 1972; harm. by Skinner Chávez-Melo, 1988  
© 1972 Alberto Taulè; trans. © 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House; harm. © 1988 Skinner Chávez-Melo

TAULÈ  
11 11.12 12

(Verses 3 and 4 on the following page)



3. Mountains and valleys will have to be made plain;  
open new highways, new highways for the Lord.  
He is now coming closer, so come all and see,  
and open the doorways as wide as wide can be.
4. In lowly stable the Promised One appeared,  
yet, feel his presence throughout the earth today,  
for he lives in all Christians and is with us now;  
again, with his coming he brings us liberty.

## 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.”**

## Sung Response In Our God I'll Be Ever Thankful

♩ = 69

In our God I'll be ev-er thank-ful, in our God I will re-joice. Look to God, do not be a-  
fraid, lift up your voic - es, our God is near, lift up your voic - es our God is near.

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: [www.bloominthedesert.org](http://www.bloominthedesert.org) and click on the Donate tab. **Thank you.**



## Offertory-Meditation Music

Dr. Denis Moreen, piano

“Gesù Bambino” by Pietro A Yon (2001)

## Presentation of Offerings and Prayer of Dedication

Linda Lang

O God of our righteousness, in whose sight a thousand years are as one day, we come this day offering our gifts. Use them to spread the news that Christ comes so that all may dwell in peace. Help us to break down whatever hostility divides our siblings and receive our prayers as we dedicate ourselves anew to becoming your agents of reconciliation.

~James G Kirk, "When We Gather – A Book of Prayers for Worship" (adapted)

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

### \* Doxology

#### Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow, praise God, all creatures here below. Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! Praise God, the source of all our gifts! Praise Je-sus Christ, whose power up-lifts! Praise the Spir-it, Ho-ly Spir-it! Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia!

### \*Prayer of Jesus (Please join hands)

Rev'd Tim Rogers

**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)

\* Sending Hymn

Joy to the World!

132

Isaac Watts, 1719; alt.

Ps. 98:4-9; Luke 2:11-15

1 Joy to the world! the Lord is come: let earth its  
 2 Joy to the earth! the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their  
 3 Christ rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the

prais - es bring; Let ev - ery heart pre - pare Christ room,  
 songs em - ploy; While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
 na - tions prove The glo - ries of God's righ - teous - ness

and heaven and na - ture sing, and heaven and na - ture  
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing  
 and won - ders of God's love, and won - ders of God's

and heaven and na - ture sing, and  
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re -  
 and won - ders of God's love, and

sing, and heaven, and heaven and na - ture sing.  
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of God's love.

heaven and na - ture sing,  
 peat the sound - ing joy,  
 won - ders of God's love,

Stanza 1 may be sung, "Joy to the world! the Sovereign comes: . . ."

Isaac Watts, an English Congregationalist, freely paraphrased Old Testament psalms to glorify Christ and here develops a hymn of advent and nativity from a psalm.

Tune: ANTIOCH C.M.  
 Lowell Mason, 1836

## 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

Dr. Denis Moreen, piano

“Glory to God” from “Messiah, Part I” by George Frideric Handel (1741)

--**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 Day: Choral Fantasy on Old Carols**, by Gustav Holst, public domain

**Pie Jesu**, by Andrew Lloyd Webber, ©1985 by Andrew Lloyd Webber licensed to The Really Useful Group Lt.

**Gesu Bambino**, by Pietro A. Yon, ©2001 by Hal Leonard Corporation

**Glory to God from Messiah, Part 1**, by George Frideric Handel, public domain

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## Bloom Happenings This Week

Monday Dec. 11	Tuesday Dec. 12	Wednesday Dec. 13	Thursday Dec. 14	Friday Dec. 15	Saturday Dec. 16	Sunday Dec. 17
<b>10:30am-1:00pm</b> Lunch for our unhoused neighbors served at United Methodist	<b>10:30am-1:00pm</b> Lunch for our unhoused neighbors served at United Methodist	<b>10:45am – 1:00pm</b> Lunch served at St. Paul's Episcopal  <b>3:00pm</b> Bloom Open Leadership Meeting in the office and on Zoom		<b>4:00pm</b> Women of Bloom Zoom Happy Hour	<b>12:30pm</b> New Member Exploration in the office  <b>2:00 to 4:00pm</b> Open House in the office	<b>10:00 am</b> Sunday Service at Demuth and on Facebook Live

## Congregational Life Announcements

--A warm welcome and thank you to **Dr. Denis Moreen**, piano, for sharing his musical talents with us today.

--Thank you to **Linda Lang, Steven Moore** and **Carl Toland**, 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.

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

Thank you also to our ushers, **Bob Patnode** and **Hector Bayardo**, for welcoming us this morning.

--Flowers on the **Worship Center**, symbolic of the living Christ, are offered to the glory of God by **Ron and Linda Lang**.

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

### Last Week's Participation

--Souls Present at Demuth: 56 --Children: 0 --First Timers: 0

--- Facebook Live Views: N/A --Facebook Total Views: 93 --YouTube Views: 10

### Sunday Offerings

Tithes, Offerings, and Participation:

Offering, online, by mail and text: \$4,564 Electronic Giving: \$2,970

Permanence Fund: \$300 Cumulative: \$322,059

Spare Change/Gift Cards \$300 Cumulative: \$1,350

UCC Christmas Fund \$180 Cumulative: \$180

Bloom's Christmas/ Year End Appeal: \$185 Cumulative: \$185

--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!

Electronic giving is easy! Scan this QR code for Bloom's mobile-friendly online giving page or visit [www.bloominthedesert.org/donateparticipate](http://www.bloominthedesert.org/donateparticipate).



**Special Congregation Meeting  
today after the service.**

## Ministries of Leadership and Support

--**Open Leadership Meetings** are typically the second Wednesday, 6:30-8:00pm PDT. The next hybrid meeting will be December 13 at 3:00pm 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**, [dinoinps@gmail.com](mailto:dinoinps@gmail.com) or **Bill Wallace** at [adminassistant@bloominthedesert.org](mailto:adminassistant@bloominthedesert.org).

--**For more information on the United Church of Christ**, visit [www.ucc.org](http://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**-. We are on holiday break until January 9<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. We will be reading "When Bad Things Happen to Good People" by Harold S. Kushner. For information or to receive the Zoom link, contact Gary Lange at [GaryLange13@gmail.com](mailto:GaryLange13@gmail.com).

### 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](mailto: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](mailto: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.