



Bloom
in the
Desert
Ministries



December 31, 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

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



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

First Sunday after Christmas
December 31, 2023

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

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

9:50am Pre-Service Music

“Carol Medley”

Julie Adams, piano

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

Music for Centering

“Star Carol”

Julie Adams, piano

* Call to Worship

Linda Lang

Through all generations God reveals the gift of love for every living creature.

At the right time, in wisdom and grace, God presented Jesus to the world to give God's way of loving in human terms and form.

The Christmas message encourages us to open our hearts and minds to receive the gospel of love, which is brought to life as people connect in loving, compassionate, and just ways.

In this sacred space we open ourselves to the ever-arriving Spirit of God who enables us continually to give birth to a better world. Aloha, Shalom, Salaam, Vrede, Myr, Ping-an, Paz, Peace. Amen.

* Opening Hymn

Angels, from the Realms of Glory

126

James Montgomery, 1816; alt.

Luke 2:8-20; Matt. 2:1-2, 9-11

1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
2 Shep - herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your flocks by night,
3 Sag - es, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, bright - er vi - sions beam a - far;
4 Saints, be - fore the al - tar bend - ing, watch - ing long in hope and fear,

As you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
God with us is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant light:
Seek the great De - sire of Na - tions, guid - ed by Christ's na - tal star:
Sud - den - ly, your prayers at - tend - ing, Christ be - side you shall ap - pear.

Refrain

Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, give thanks and sing.

James Montgomery, English journalist, raised a strong voice against injustice in his newspaper Sheffield Iris, in which this hymn was first printed on December 24, 1816. The tune is named for Regent Square Church in London, today a congregation of the United Reformed Church in England and Wales.

Tune: REGENT SQUARE 8.7.8.7.8.7.
Henry T. Smart, 1867

In Faith We Open Our Hearts to Ministry

Prayer for Good and Growth

As we contemplate the greatest gift God bestows, let us now pray this “Christmas Prayer”:
Loving Source of all life and things: Help us remember the birth of Jesus, so we continue the songs of heavenly angels, the deep love of blessed parents, the gladness of common shepherds, and the crafty adoration of the worldly wise-ones. Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good wishes with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing that Christ brings and teach us to be merry with clear hearts. May these Christmastide mornings make us happy to be your creation, and Christmastide evenings bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, loving and loved, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

~Robert Louis Stevenson, 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 all, wonderful counselor for everyone, receive now our silent prayers.

~ Silence ~

To all our silent prayers let the people say amen. **Amen.**

Words of Encouragement

(Our) help comes from YHWH, who made heaven and earth! YHWH won't let our footsteps slip: our Guardian never sleeps.

Amen. Let us now receive the Word.

Sung Response

Halle, Halle, Hallelujah!

Buddy Sizemore, guitar

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

Psalm 98

Rev. Douglas Holder

Sing a new song to YHWH,
who has worked wonders,
whose right hand and holy arm
have brought deliverance.

YHWH has made salvation known
and shown divine justice to the nations,
and has remembered in truth and love
the house of Israel.
All the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.

Shout to the Most High, all the earth,
break into joyous songs of praise!

Sing praise to YHWH with the harp,
with the harp and melodious singing!

With trumpets and the blast of the shofar,
raise a shout to YHWH, Ruler of All.

Let the sea and all within it thunder;
the world and all its peoples.

Let the rivers clap their hands
and the hills ring out their joy

before YHWH, who comes to judge the earth,
who will rule the world with justice
and its peoples with equity.

~Inclusive Bible Version

*** Gospel Reading**

Luke 2:8-20

Rich Fluechtling

There were shepherds in the area living in the fields and keeping night watch by turns over their flock. The angel of God appeared to them, and the glory of God shone around them; they were very much afraid.

The angel said to them, “You have nothing to fear! I come to proclaim good news to you—news of a great joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in David’s city, a savior—the Messiah—has been born to you. Let this be a sign to you: you’ll find an infant wrapped in a simple cloth, lying in a manger.”

Suddenly, there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in high heaven!

And on earth, peace to those on whom God’s favor rests.”

When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go straight to Bethlehem and see this event that God has made known to us.” They hurried and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger; once they saw this, they reported what they had been told concerning the child. All who heard about it were astonished at the report given by the shepherds.

Mary treasured all these things and reflected on them in her heart. The shepherds went away glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as they had been told.

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



* Hymn of Response

Away in a Manger

124

Anon., United States, 1885; st. 3, 1892; alt.

Luke 2:7

F B \flat F

1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for a bed, the
 2 The cat - tle are low - ing, the poor ba - by wakes, but
 3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask you to stay close

C7 F

lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down his sweet head. The
 lit - tle Lord Je - sus, no cry - ing he makes. I
 by me for - ev - er and love me, I pray. Bless

F B \flat F

stars in the sky looked down where he lay, the
 love you, Lord Je - sus; pro - tect me, I pray, and
 all the dear chil - dren in your ten - der care, and

C7 F B \flat C7 F

lit - tle Lord Je - sus, a - sleep on the hay.
 stay by my side un - til night turns to day.
 fit us for heav - en to live with you there.

This anonymous United States carol is often misattributed to Luther. The poem first appeared in a Lutheran hymnal for schools and families. Though he never credited himself with it, the tune most likely was composed by Murray.

Tune: AWAY IN A MANGER 11.11.11.11.
 (MÜLLER)
 Atrib. to James R. Murray, 1887

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

Buddy Sizemore, guitar

♩ = 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 and click on the Donate tab. **Thank you.**



Offertory-Meditation Music “Were You There on That Christmas Night?”

Elaine Wang Meyerhoffer, mezzo and Julie Adams, piano

Presentation of Offerings and Prayer of Dedication

Linda Lang

Eternal God, you bless your creation, and it springs forth with beauty. You judge your people with righteousness and new life abounds. We bring you now the fruits of our labors. Bless the work of our hands, so that what we do reflects the radiance of your love. Fill us with your Holy Spirit; so that what we say proclaims to all people the new hope in Jesus. Amen.

~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**

Julie Adams, piano

Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow

The musical score is written on four staves in a 3/8 time signature with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody is simple and hymn-like. The lyrics are: "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

Go Tell It on the Mountain

154

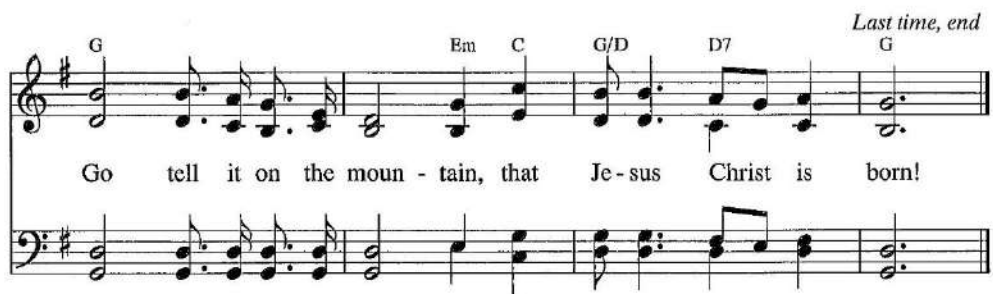
African-American spiritual
Arr. John W. Work II, 1907

Luke 2:8-20; Isa. 18:3; 52:7

Refrain

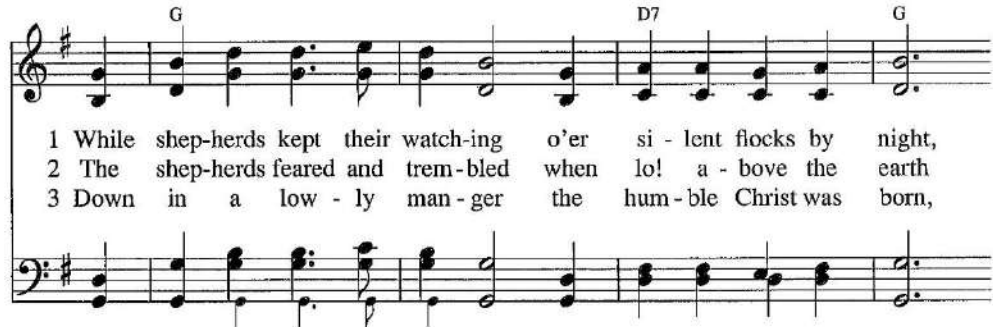


Go tell it on the moun - tain, o - ver the hill and ev - ery - where.

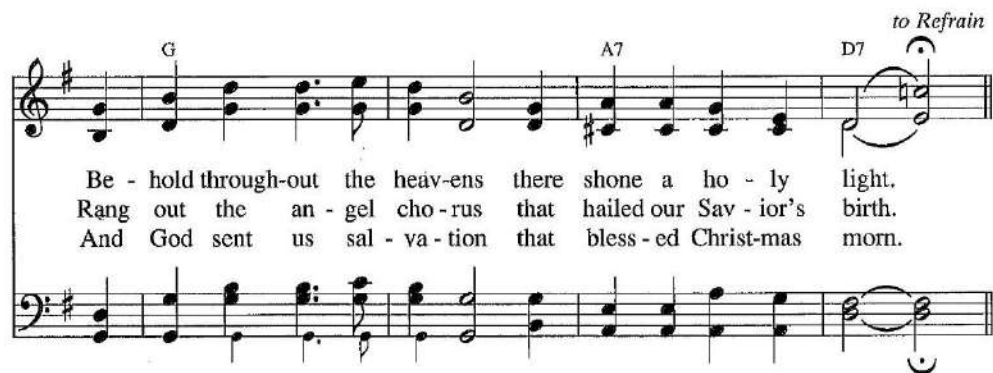


Go tell it on the moun - tain, that Je - sus Christ is born!

Last time, end



1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when lo! a - bove the earth
3 Down in a low - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born,



Be - hold through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light,
Rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
And God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

to Refrain

This is one of the few spirituals heard inside as well as outside African-American churches. It was adapted by John Wesley Work II, who is remembered as the director of the Jubilee Singers of Fisk University.

*Tune: African-American spiritual
Adapt. Joyce Finch Johnson, 1992*

*** 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

“Go Tell It on the Mountain”

Julie Adams, piano

Bloom Happenings This Week						
Monday January 1	Tuesday January 2	Wednesday January 3	Thursday January 4	Friday January 5	Saturday January 6	Sunday January 7
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	10:45am – 1:00pm Lunch served at St. Paul's Episcopal	2:00pm Spring Fling 15 Planning Meeting in the office 6:00pm BibleBites on Zoom	4:00pm Women of Bloom Zoom Happy Hour		10:00 am Sunday Service at Demuth and on Facebook Live Epiphany Star Sunday

--**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.

Carol Medley, arr. by M. Hayes

Star Carol, arr. by M. Hayes

Were You There on that Christmas Night, N. Sleeth

Go Tell It on the Mountain, arr. by M. Hayes

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Congregational Life Announcements

--A warm welcome and thank you to **Julie Adams**, piano, for sharing her musical talents with us today

--Thank you to **Linda Lang**, **Rev. Douglas Holder** and **Rich Fluechtling**, 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 **JacksonENZler** for handling the A/V technical aspects for today's service.

Thank you also to our ushers, **Robert Van Dyke** and **Gary Lange**, for welcoming us this morning.

--**Flowers on the Worship Center**, symbolic of the living Christ, are offered to the glory of God by **Ray Stimson** and **Bob Patnode** in memory of Bob's mother.

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

Last Week's Participation

10am service--Souls Present at Demuth: 63 --Children: 0 --First Timers: 0
--- Facebook Live Views: 10 --Facebook Total Views: 104 --YouTube Views: 7
7pm service—Souls Present at Demuth: 55 --Children: 0 --First Timers: 4
--- Facebook Live Views: 3 --Facebook Total Views: 70 --YouTube Views: 8

Sunday Offerings

Tithes, Offerings, and Participation: (both services combined)

Offering, online, by mail and text: \$880 Electronic Giving: \$550

Permanence Fund: \$0 Cumulative: \$322,434

Spare Change/Gift Cards \$388 Cumulative: \$1,738

Bloom's Christmas/ Year End Appeal: \$450 Cumulative: \$3,770 Goal: \$15,000

--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.



Ministries of Leadership and Support

--**Open Leadership Meetings** are typically the second Wednesday, 6:30-8:00pm PDT. The next hybrid meeting will be January 10 at 6:00pm 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**, dinoins@gmail.com 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**- resumes Thursdays beginning January 4, 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 return January 9th 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.

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.