



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



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

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany  
Communion Sunday  
February 4, 2024

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**

Malcolm Swan, 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**

Linda Lang, Worship Leader

**Music for Centering**

“Pass It On”

Malcolm Swan, piano

## \* Call to Worship

Lynda Toland

We gather in beloved community to worship God, who is compassionate and awesome. We join hearts and minds to co-create a faithful and just world.

**In this sacred space we are invited to bask in “Heaven on Earth” with each other and the Spirit of God in us and around us.**

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

## \* Opening Hymn

4

## Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You

*Ps. 145:10; Isa. 49:13*

*Henry van Dyke, 1907; alt.*

1 Joy - ful, joy - ful, we a - dore you, God of glo - ry, God of love;  
2 All your works with joy sur-round you, earth and heaven re - flect your rays,  
3 You are giv - ing and for-giv - ing, ev - er bless-ing, ev - er blessed,  
4 Mor-tals, join the might-y cho - rus which the morn-ing stars be - gan;

Hearts un - fold like flowers be - fore you, open-ing to the sun a - bove.  
Stars and an - gels sing a - round you, cen - ter of un - bro - ken praise.  
Well-spring of the joy of liv - ing, o - cean depth of hap - py rest!  
Bound-less love is reign - ing o'er us, re - con - cil - ing race and clan.

Melt the clouds of sin and sad - ness, drive the storms of doubt a - way;  
Field and for - est, vale and moun-tain, flower-y mead-ow, flash-ing sea,  
Lov - ing Spir - it, Fa - ther, Moth - er, all who love be - long to you;  
Ev - er sing - ing, move we for - ward, faith - ful in the midst of strife,



*Henry van Dyke was a noted church leader, U.S. ambassador, Navy chaplain, and prolific writer. Many people associate this hymn with Beethoven's ninth symphony, but few are aware of the original poem by the German classicist F. Schiller (1759–1805) that inspired Beethoven.*

Tune: HYMN TO JOY 8.7.8.7.D.  
Ludwig van Beethoven, 1824  
Adapt. and harm. Edward Hodges, 1846

## In Faith We Open Our Hearts to Ministry

### Prayer for Good and Growth

Let us pray this prayer, authored by Swedish diplomat Dag Hammarskjöld, a gay man, the second Secretary General of the United Nations, murdered in 1961, by a plane crash in Africa while trying to negotiate peace:

Thou who art over us,

**Thou who art one of us,**

Thou who art also within us,

**may all see thee in me also.**

May I prepare the way for thee,

**may I thank thee for all that shall fall to my lot.**

May I also not forget the needs of others,

**keep me in thy love as thou wouldst,**

that all should be kept in mine.

**May everything in this my being be directed to thy glory,**

and may I never despair.

**for I am under thy hand, And in thee is all power and goodness.**

Give me a pure heart – that I may see thee,

**a humble heart – that I may hear thee,**

a heart of love – that I may serve thee,

**a heart of faith – that I may abide in thee.**

To love life and (all human beings) as God loves them –

**for the sake of their infinite possibilities. Amen.** (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 life and love, hear now our silent prayers.

~ Silence ~

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

### Words of Encouragement

Faithful God of Justice, our rock and our fortress: in an age when slander is mistaken for wisdom, pride masquerades as strength, and perjury defies truth, show us the way of integrity and faith. Give us courage to oppose all oppression in our land, so that today and every day we may sing your praises with upright and loving hearts.

**Blessing and praise to God forever. 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

Isaiah 40:21-31

Alan Weaver

Did you not know?

Have you not heard?

Was it not told to you from the beginning?

Have you not understood since the earth was founded?

YHWH sits above the vaulted roof of the world,

and its inhabitants look like grasshoppers!

God stretches out the skies like a curtain,

and spreads them out like a tent of mortals to live under!

God reduces the privileged to nothing

and throws the rulers of the earth into chaos.

No sooner are they planted,  
no sooner are they sown,  
no sooner do they take root on earth,  
than God blows on them and they wither,  
and a storm wind sweeps them away like chaff.

“To whom do you liken me?  
Who is my equal?” says the Holy One.

Lift up your eyes and ask yourself  
who made these stars,  
if not the One who drills them like an army,  
calling each by name?  
Because God is so great in strength,  
so mighty in power,  
not a single one is missing.

How can you say, tribe of Leah and Rachel and Jacob,  
“My destiny is hidden from YHWH,  
my rights are ignored by my God?”

Do you not know? Have you not heard?  
YHWH is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.  
God does not faint or grow weary,  
and empowers the powerless.

Young women may grow tired and weary,  
young men may stumble and fall,

but those who wait for YHWH  
find a renewed power:  
they soar on eagles’ wings,  
they run and don’t get weary,  
they walk and never tire.

(Inclusive Bible Version)

### \* Gospel Reading

Mark 1:29-39

Carl Toland

Upon leaving the synagogue, Jesus entered Simon’s and Andrew’s house with James and John. Simon’s mother-in-law lay ill with fever, and immediately they told Jesus about her.

Jesus went over to her, took her by the hand and helped her up, and the fever left her. Then she went about her work.

After sunset, as evening drew on, they brought to Jesus all who were ill and possessed by demons. Everyone in the town crowded around the door. Jesus healed many who were sick with different diseases and cast out many demons. But Jesus would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew who he was.

Rising early the next morning, Jesus went off to a lonely place in the desert and prayed there. Simon and some companions managed to find Jesus and said to him, “Everybody is looking for you!”

Jesus said to them, “Let us move on to the neighboring villages so that I may proclaim the Good News there also. That is what I have come to do.” So, Jesus went into their synagogues proclaiming the Good News and expelling demons throughout the whole of Galilee.

(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. Douglas Holder

## Offering our Prayer Concerns, and Joys and Thanksgivings

Concerns:

Linda Lang, 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.

## 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

Malcolm Swan, piano

“On the Wind of Spirit

## Presentation of Offerings and Prayer of Dedication

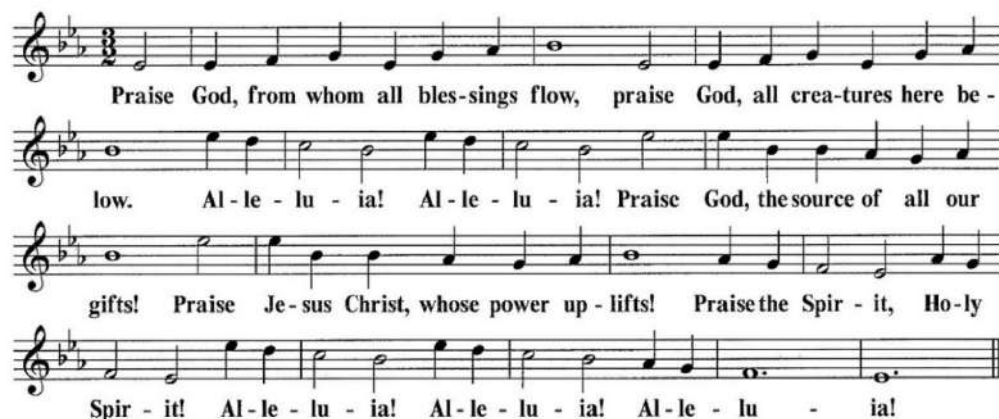
Lynda Toland

You are worthy, O God, of more honor than mere humans can hope to bestow on you. You are God of all creation, and the source of all goodness. We dare to approach you with our gifts of thanksgiving. Receive them as symbols of our wholehearted praise. Transform what we bring you to harmonize with your wishes, and convert all our actions to accord with your will. Amen.

(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 be low. 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!

## The Great Thanksgiving

God is with you.

Rev. Douglas Holder

**And also with you.**

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.**

**Lynda Toland:** 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)

*Text and music: Anon., Argentina*

San - to, san - to, san - to, mi cor - a - zón te a - do - ra! Mi  
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, my heart, my heart a - dores you! My

cor - a - zón te sa - be de - cir: san - to e - res Dios.  
heart is glad to say the words: you are ho - ly, God.

**Carl Toland:** 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."**

**Lynda Toland:** 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."**



**Carl Toland:** 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**

Rev. Douglas Holder

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**

"The Love of Jesus Medley"

Malcolm Swan, piano

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

Rev. Douglas Holder

**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

76

Sent Forth by God's Blessing

Omer Westendorf, 1964

*Descant*

2 With praise and thanks - giv - ing to God ev - er liv - ing, the

*Unison*

1 Sent forth by God's bless-ing, our true faith con - fess-ing, the  
2 With praise and thanks - giv - ing to God ev - er liv - ing, the

tasks of our ev - ery - day life we will face. Our faith ev - er

peo - ple of God from this dwell-ing take leave. The ser - vice is  
tasks of our ev - ery - day life we will face. Our faith ev - er

shar - ing, in love ev - er car - ing, em - brac - ing God's chil - dren of

end - ed, O now be ex - tend - ed the fruits of our wor - ship in  
shar - ing, in love ev - er car - ing, em - brac - ing God's chil - dren of

*Omer Westendorf, author of numerous hymns, compiler of several hymnals, and founder of World Library Publications, included this hymn in People's Mass Book, 1964, the first vernacular Roman Catholic hymn and service book to implement the decrees of Vatican II.*

Tune: THE ASH GROVE 6.6.11.6.6.11.D.  
*Welsh folk melody*  
Harm. Leland Sateren, 1972  
Descant, The New Century Hymnal, 1993

each tribe and race. With your grace you feed us, with  
 all who be - lieve. The seed of the teach - ing, re -  
 each tribe and race. With your grace you feed us, with

your light now lead us, u - nite us as one in this  
 cep - tive hearts reach - ing, shall blos - som in ac - tion for  
 your light now lead us, u - nite us as one in this

life that we share. Then may all the liv - ing with praise and thanks -  
 God and for all. God's grace did in - vite us, and love shall u -  
 life that we share. Then may all the liv - ing with praise and thanks -

giv - ing give hon - or to Christ and that name which we bear.  
 nite us to work for God's realm and to an - swer the call.  
 giv - ing give hon - or to Christ and that name which we bear.

## Benediction and Blessing

Rev. Douglas Holder

Our worship has ended. Our service begins. What does God need from us?

**“Simply do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God.”**

Continue to serve with faith and love,  
depart from this time today committed to sharing the best of yourself,  
through extravagant generosity of time and resources,  
meeting the needs of others, both spoken and unspoken, seen and unseen, heard and unheard.

**We will go now seeking justice, sharing compassion, and promoting hope in the world.**

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

“Steal Away”

Malcolm Swan, piano

| <b>Bloom Happenings This Week</b>  |  |   |  |   |                         |  |
|--|--|---|--|---|-------------------------|--|
| Monday<br>February 5   | Tuesday<br>February 6  | Wednesday<br>February 7   | Thursday<br>February 8   | Friday<br>February 9                            | Saturday<br>February 10 | Sunday<br>February 11  |
| <b>10:30am-1:00pm</b><br>Lunch for our unhoused neighbors served at United Methodist | <b>10:30am-1:00pm</b><br>Lunch for our unhoused neighbors served at United Methodist | <b>10:45am – 1:00pm</b><br>Lunch served at St. Paul’s Episcopal | <b>10:00am</b><br>Jews and Christians Reading Together on Zoom | <b>4:00pm</b><br>Women of Bloom Zoom Happy Hour |                         | <b>10:00 am</b><br>Sunday Service at Demuth and on Facebook Live |
| <b>3:00 pm</b><br>Open Leadership Meeting on Zoom                                    | <b>6:00pm</b><br>Book Group on Zoom  |   |  |   |                         |  |

--**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.

**Pass It On** by Kurt Kaiser, arr. by Mark Hayes

**On the Wind of Spirit**, by Mark Hayes

**The Love of Jesus Medley** arr. by Mark Hayes

**Steal Away**, Traditional Spiritual

**It Is Well with My Soul**, by Phillip P. Bliss, arr. by Hartan Rogers and Smitty Price © 1986 by Marantha! Music

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# Congregational Life Announcements

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

--Thank you to **Lynda Toland**, **Alan Weaver**, and **Carl Toland**, for serving as readers for today's service, and to **John Dinapoli** for serving as worship leader. Special thanks to **Rev. Douglas Holder** for presenting our commentary this morning and the Communion service along with **Lynda** and **Carl Toland**.

--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 **Paul Gibb**.

--Those wishing to donate flowers may contact **Carol Moore** at [carolmooreinteriors@gmail.com](mailto:carolmooreinteriors@gmail.com) for assistance.

## Last Week's Participation

--Souls Present at Demuth: 59 --Children: 0 --First Timers: 2

--- Facebook Live Views: 16 -Facebook Total Views: 92 --YouTube Views: 12

## Sunday Offerings

Tithes, Offerings, and Participation:

Offering, online, by mail and text: \$7,606 Electronic Giving: \$961

Permanence Fund: \$0 Cumulative: \$323,034

Spring Fling Reservations: 111 Goal: 150

--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).**



## Ministries of Leadership and Support

**--Open Leadership Meetings --** At the January Open Leadership meeting, it was approved to change the time of the meetings from 6:30 pm to 2:00pm going forward. The next hybrid meeting will be March 13 at 2:00pm 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 11 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](mailto:dinoins@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

**--Bloom Book Club-** Tuesdays 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).

**--Jews and Christians Reading Together – Isaiah**, Thursdays at 10am on Zoom, led by Rabbi David Lazar and Rev. Dr. Stephen Kenney. For more information, contact Gary Lange at [GaryLnage13@gmail.com](mailto:GaryLnage13@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.

# Annual Meeting

**next Sunday following the service  
in the Hospitality Room  
and on Zoom.**



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



# ***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)**