



Bloom
in the
Desert
Ministries



January 7, 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

Epiphany Sunday
January 7, 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-joyce, 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-joyce, and come in.

Welcome and News of the Congregation

Wayne Sinclair, Worship Leader

Music for Centering

“Wonderful Peace”
Swedish hymn by Gustaf Nordqvist

Malcolm Swan, piano

*** Call to Worship**

Carol Moore

The radiance of a star guided the travelers into the presence of Jesus where they offered most precious and prophetic gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

You give us more than a star, O God, to guide us.

So today we prepare our hearts and minds again to receive the gospel of hope and healing, which is ours to give as we embrace and share the ministry of Jesus Christ.

In this sacred space, we gather to commune with each other and the Spirit of God. Aloha, Shalom, Salaam, Vrede, Myr, Ping-an, Paz, Peace. Amen.

*** Opening Hymn**

As with Gladness Those of Old

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William C. Dix, 1861; alt.

Matt. 2:1-12

1 As with glad-ness those of old did the guid-ing star be - hold;
2 As with joy - ful steps they sped to that low - ly man-ger bed,
3 As they of - fered gifts most rare at that man-ger plain and bare,
4 Ho - ly Je - sus, ev - ery day keep us in the nar - row way;

As with joy they hailed its light, lead-ing on - ward, beam-ing bright;
There to bend the knee be - fore One whom heaven and earth a - dore;
So may we with ho - ly joy, pure and free from sin's al - loy,
And when mor - tal things are past, bring our ran - somed souls at last

So, true Morn-ing Star, may we ev - er-more your splen-dor see.
 So may we with will - ing feet ev - er seek your mer - cy seat.
 All our cost - liest trea - sures bring, Christ, to you from whom they spring.
 Where they need no star to guide, where no clouds your glo - ry hide.

After reading the Epiphany gospel, William C. Dix penned this hymn. Dix, the manager of a marine insurance company, was also a gifted hymnwriter. Among his many fine contributions is "What Child Is This."

Tune: DIX 7.7.7.7.7.
 Conrad Kocher, 1838
 Adapt. William H. Monk, 1861

In Faith We Open Our Hearts to Ministry

Prayer for Good And Growth

O, Church, praise the God of Love!

Earth and Sky, worship the Creator!

Angelic powers of light eternal, penetrating the ancient darkness, lift your voices with song:

Holy, holy, holy,

Eternal God of Power and love,

Creation sings your glory.

Saints and fools of every generation

sing alleluias to your name.

Prophets crying out for justice

sing alleluias to your name.

Martyrs who carried you in their wounds, now embodied in glory,

sing alleluias to your name.

Giver of life, of splendor and wonder, tender of infinite patience!

Bearer of pain, graceful and true, with wounds bringing life!

Maker of love, flaming and passionate, guiding us into truth!

Christ, we greet you in your glory, hidden deep in the being of God,

Word made flesh to save us, brought to life by human touch.

Glad to be born of Mary, your body human and divine,

destroying the sting of death terrifying us with love unbounded,
**offering to fulfill all we could desire, opening the road to God's presence
forever,**

guarding the freedom of creation, healing the earth's wounds.

Come, then, judge and deliver us, who are freed at the cost of your own life.

Give us integrity to refuse what is evil, give us your Spirit to discern what is true,

And lead us with all your saints to lands of eternal glory.

Paraphrase of Te Deum by Jim Cotter, alt., Prayer at Day's Dawning © 2001 by Jim Cotter

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 silent prayers.

~ Silence ~

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

Words of Encouragement

God of grace and truth, whose word brings light to birth in the heart of a darkening world:
may all flesh be blessed and born anew by a truth which leaves the heavens and walks the
waiting earth, the truth of Jesus Christ, your word in the beginning and forever.

Amen. Let us now receive the Word.

Sung Response

Halle, Halle, Hallelujah!

Buddy Sizemore, guitar

The musical notation consists of three staves in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The first staff begins with a 4-measure rest, followed by the melody for 'Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah.' The second staff continues the melody with 'Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le, ___'. The third staff concludes with 'lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah.' The melody is primarily eighth and quarter notes with some rests.

The Word Informs Our Living with Grace and Power

Hebrew Scripture Reading

Genesis 1:1-13a

Rev. Douglas Holder

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. But the earth became chaos and emptiness came over the face of the Deep—yet the Spirit of God was brooding over the surface of the waters.

Then God said, “Light: Be!” and light was. God saw that light was good, and God separated light from darkness. God called the light “Day” and the darkness “Night.” Evening came, and morning followed—the first day.

Then God said, “Now, make an expanse between the waters! Separate water from water!” So it was: God made the expanse and separated the water above the expanse from the water below it. God called the expanse “Sky.” Evening came, and morning followed—the second day.

Then God said, “Waters under the sky: be gathered into one place! Dry ground appear!” So it was. God called the dry ground “Earth” and the gathering of the waters “Sea.” And God saw that this was good. Then God said, “Earth: produce vegetation—plants that scatter their own seeds, and every kind of fruit tree that bears fruit with its own seed in it! So it was: the earth brought forth every kind of plant that bears seed, and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it. And God saw that this was good. Evening came, and morning followed.

~Inclusive Bible Version

* Gospel Reading

Luke 2:22-32

Linda Lang

When the day came for them to be purified, as laid down by the Law of Moses, the couple took Jesus up to Jerusalem and presented him to God. For it’s written in the Law of our God, “Every firstborn heir is to be consecrated to God.” They likewise came to offer in sacrifice “a pair of turtledoves and two young pigeons,” in accord with the dictate of the Law of our God.

Now there lived in Jerusalem a man named Simeon. He was devout and just, anticipating the consolation of Israel, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit. She had revealed to Simeon that he wouldn’t see death until he had seen the Messiah of God. Prompted by her, Simeon came to the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child to perform the customary rituals of the Law, he took the child in his arms and praised God, saying,

“Now, O God, you can dismiss your servant in peace,
just as you promised;
because my eyes have seen the salvation
which you have prepared for all the peoples to see—
a light of revelation to the gentiles
and the glory of your people Israel.”

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

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Epiphany Star Experiences

Mindy Harrington
Steven Moore
Suzanne Meyer

Offering our Prayer Concerns, and Joys and Thanksgivings

Concerns:

Wayne Sinclair, 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 and click on the Donate tab. **Thank you.**



Offertory-Meditation Music "Three Kings March" by Bizet

Malcolm Swan, piano

Presentation of Offerings and Prayer of Dedication

Carol Moore

O God, as wise rulers of old brought gifts and worshiped a newly born baby, we also bring offerings in praise of him whom you have sent. The star that we follow is the light of Christ's teachings, calling us to be faithful in service to all in need. Accept what we earn. The products of our creative energy and talent. Let this be the gold, frankincense, and myrrh that we bring. By our gifts may a sad and needy world be enriched and comforted. 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

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. Ron Lang

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.

Linda Lang: 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.

Carol Moore: 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.”

Linda Lang: 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.”

Linda Lang: 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. Ron Lang

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

"Come Thou Fount" by John Wyeth

Malcolm Swan, piano

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

Rev. Ron Lang

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. Ron Lang is an associate member of Bloom. Rev. Lang was raised in Carpenter, Wyoming, and is a retired United Methodist Minister, who served churches in the Yellowstone Conference in Montana and Wyoming. He also is a retired USDA Entomologist for biological weed control and a current certified Master Flower Show Judge.

* Sending Hymn

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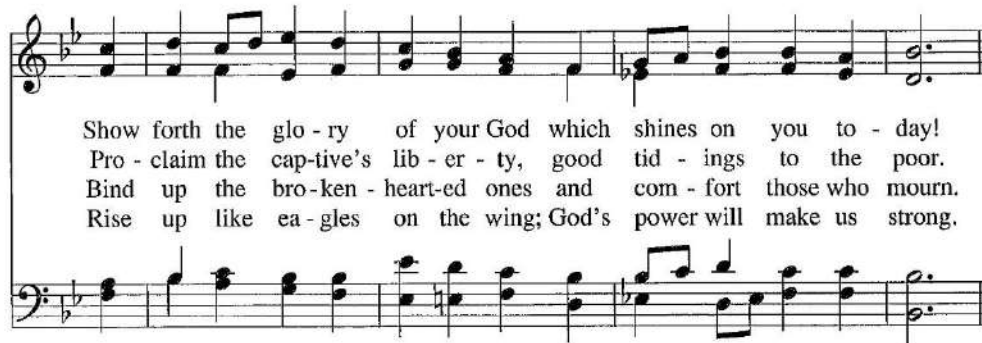
Arise, Your Light Is Come

Isa. 60:1; 61:1-2; Luke 4:14-21

Ruth Duck, 1973



1 A - rise, your light is come! The Spir - it's call o - bey;
2 A - rise, your light is come! Fling wide the pris - on door;
3 A - rise, your light is come! All you in sor - row born,
4 A - rise, your light is come! The moun-tains burst in song!



Show forth the glo - ry of your God which shines on you to - day!
Pro - claim the cap-tive's lib - er - ty, good tid - ings to the poor.
Bind up the bro-ken - heart-ed ones and com - fort those who mourn.
Rise up like ea - gles on the wing; God's power will make us strong.

This hymn was first published by the Ecumenical Women's Center of Chicago in the 1974 collection of hymn adaptations, Because We Are One People. Ruth Duck later included it in her own collection, Dancing in the Universe.

Tune: FESTAL SONG S.M.
William Walter, 1872

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Benediction and Blessing

Rev. Ron Lang

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

“March” from “Scipio” by Handel Malcolm Swan, piano

Bloom Happenings This Week

Monday January 8	Tuesday January 9	Wednesday January 10	Thursday January 11	Friday January 12	Saturday January 13	Sunday January 14
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 6pm Book Group on Zoom	10:45am – 1:00pm Lunch served at St. Paul’s Episcopal 6:30pm Open Leadership in the office and on Zoom	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.

Wonderful Peace, Swedish hymn by Gustaf Nordqvist

Three Kings March, by Bizet, arr. by Kevin Norbury

Come Thou Fount, by John Wyeth

March, from “Scipio” by Handel

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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 **Carol Moore, Rev. Douglas Holder, and Linda Lang**, for serving as readers for today's service, and to **Wayne Sinclair** for serving as worship leader. Thank you to Mindy Harrington, Steven Moore and Suzanne Meyer for sharing their observations about their Epiphany stars from last year. Special thanks to **Rev. Ron Lang, Carol Moore, and Linda Lang** for leading the Great Thanksgiving this morning.

--Thank you to **Jackson Enzler** for handling the A/V technical aspects for today's service. Thank you also to our ushers, **Jim Nixon and Pamela Robinson**, for welcoming us this morning.

--**Flowers on the Worship Center**, symbolic of the living Christ, are offered to the glory of God by **Carol Moore** in celebration of the New Year with our Bloom Family.

--Those wishing to donate flowers may contact **Carol Moore** at carolmooreinteriors@gmail.com for assistance.

Last Week's Participation

--Souls Present at Demuth: 63 --Children: 0 --First Timers: 1
--- Facebook Live Views: 16 -Facebook Total Views: 77 --YouTube Views: 13

Sunday Offerings

Tithes, Offerings, and Participation:

Offering, online, by mail and text: \$1,085 Electronic Giving: \$1,188

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

Bloom's Christmas/ Year End Appeal: \$1,646 Cumulative: \$5,416 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 6:30pm 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**, 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 11, at 6pm on Zoom. Rev. Shelly Alexa Somerville, a Bloom member, will be facilitating the study of the **Gospel of John**.

--**Bloom Book Club**- resumes 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.