



Third Sunday of Advent

Come to the Manger Blessing of the Animals

~ Joy ~

December 15, 2024

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

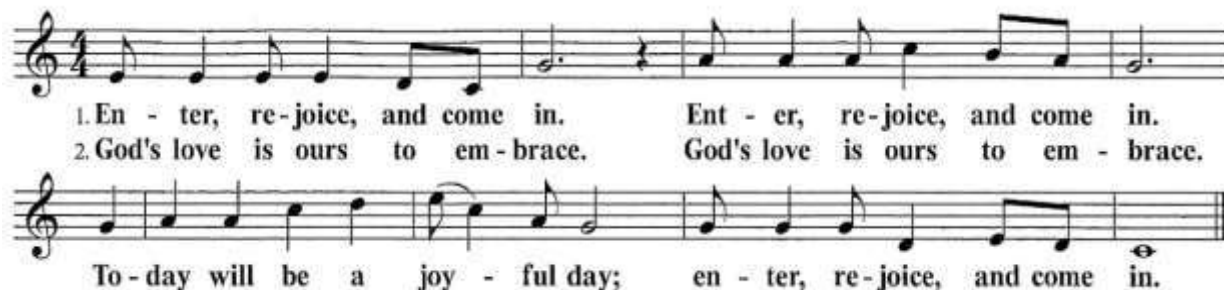
* Please rise as you are able in body and spirit.

9:50am Pre-Service Music

Rev. Doug Holder, piano

“Ave Maria” by J. S. Bach and Charles Gounod

10:00am Gathering Song



Welcome and News of the Congregation

Rev. Jeff Munnis

Lighting the Advent Candle

Joy

Rev. Ron and Linda Lang

When I look around, I see shadows of sadness, families in homeless shelters, people in prison, people who have become invisible and forgotten...

When I look around, I see shadows of grief and loss, people dreading the holidays because they've lost a loved one, because they're recently divorced, because they don't want to spend another Christmas alone...

(The third candle is lighted)

In the face of sadness, we light a candle of joy...

In the face of grief, in the face of loss, we light a candle of joy...

May the light from this candle overwhelm the world.

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

Brothers and sisters, and non-binary friends, be not afraid, God's joy is at hand!

Music for Centering

“The Peace Carol” by Bob Beers

Rev. Doug Holder, piano

* Call to Worship

Paul Gibb

All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,

All things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all.

We are gathered to worship our Creator God who gave us eyes to see the divine handiwork,
and lips to bless it with our respect and fortunes.

**In this hour, we are nourished by our Creator and each other. Our purpose
now is to bring the world God’s promised love and...**

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

* Opening Hymn

86

When Morning Gilds the Skies

Ps. 5:3; 59:16-17

Katholisches Gesangbuch, 1828
Transl. Edward Caswall, 1854; alt.

1 When morn - ing gilds the skies, my heart a - wak - ing cries,
2 New strength comes night or day when from the heart we say,
3 Dis - cor - dant hu - man - kind, in this your con - cord find,
4 Be this, while life is mine, my can - ti - cle di - vine,

may Je - sus Christ be praised! A - like - at work and prayer,
may Je - sus Christ be praised! Let sin and e - vil fear,
may Je - sus Christ be praised! Let all the earth a - round
may Je - sus Christ be praised! Be this the e - ter - nal song,



This anonymous German Catholic hymn was translated to English by Edward Caswall, an Anglican—and later, Roman Catholic—priest. Among the scripture references is Psalm 5:3, "O God, in the morning you hear my voice. . . ."

*Tune: LAUDES DOMINI 6.6.6.6.6.6.
Joseph Barnby, 1868*

In Faith We Open Our Hearts to Ministry

Prayer for Good and Growth

On this day when we “Come to the Manger” to bless our animal friends, let us pray this “Prayer for Our Earth”:

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey toward your infinite light. We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love, and peace.

~ Laudato Si'

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 and converse with God. Relax, and enjoy the embrace of a spiritual dimension.)

Eternal Source of love and creativity, hear now our sincere and silent prayers.

~ Silence ~

To all our silent prayers let the people say amen.

Amen.

The Words of Encouragement

Theologian Karl Barth reminds us: “Joy is the simplest form of gratitude.”

Amen! Blessing and praise to God forever. Let us now receive the Word.

Sung Response

Halle, Halle, Hallelujah!



The Word Informs Our Living with Grace and Power

Hebrew Scripture Reading

Isaiah 12:2-6

Loretta Martin

You are my deliverer, O God!

I trust you and am no longer afraid of you—
you are my strength and my refuge.
You are my deliverer.”

With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation.

And on that Day you will say:

“Give thanks to YHWH,
invoke God’s holy Name!
Make known among all the people what YHWH has done.
Proclaim that God’s Name is exalted.

Sing praises to YHWH, for God has triumphed.
Let this be known throughout the world!

Cry out, shout aloud, you who dwell in Zion,
for the Holy One of Israel dwells among us in majesty!”

~Inclusive Bible Version

Here ends the Hebrew scripture reading.

* Gospel Reading

Luke 3:7-18

Alan Weaver

John said to the crowds who came out to be baptized by him, “You pack of snakes. Who warned you to escape the wrath to come? Produce good fruit as a sign of your repentance. And don’t presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Sarah and Abraham as our mother and father,’ for I tell you that God can raise children for Sarah and Abraham from these very stones. The ax is already laid at the root of the tree; every tree that doesn’t produce good fruit will be cut down and tossed into the fire.”

When the people asked him, “What should we do?” John replied, “Let the one with two coats share with the one who has none. Let those who have food do the same.”

Tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to John, “Teacher, what are we to do?”

John answered them, “Exact nothing over and above your fixed amount.”

Soldiers likewise asked, “What about us?” John told them, “Don’t bully anyone. Don’t accuse anyone falsely. Be content with your pay.”

The people were full of anticipation, wondering in their hearts whether John might be the Messiah. John answered them all by saying, “I am baptizing you in water, but someone is coming who is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not fit to untie! This One will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire.” A winnowing-fan is in his hand to clear the threshing floor and gather the wheat into the granary, but the chaff will be burnt in unquenchable fire.”

~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. Jeff Munnis

Come to the Manger Pet Blessing

Rev. Jeff Munnis

Priesthood of All Believers Blessing Your Animals

Gracious God, our Creator, from your sacred breath came forth birds and beasts, fish and fowl, creatures of such variety and beauty that we are continually amazed at your divine imagination.

These children of yours have been blessed by you, our Creator, with simplicity, beauty, and purpose and by Jesus in his love for all creatures.

May we, in this pattern, now bless these pets and animal friends of ours, by taking delight in their beauty and spirit.

**May we bless them with Noah-like protection from all that may harm them.
May we, like Adam and Eve, speak to these creatures of yours with kindness and affection, appreciating their presence in our world.**

May we never treat them as “dumb” animals, but rather seek to learn their language and to be students of all the secrets they know.

May the blessing of God rest upon these creatures, who are companions with us in the journey of life.

~Thanks to Rev. Woodley White, adapted

Hymn of Response

“The Friendly Beasts”

Unison



1. Je - sus, our broth - er, strong and good, was hum - bly
2. “I,” said the don - key, shag - gy and brown, “I car - ried his
3. “I,” said the cow, all white and red, “I gave him my
4. “I,” said the sheep with curl - y horn, “I gave him my
5. “I,” said the dove, from the raf - ters high, “I cooed him to
6. Thus all the beasts, by some good spell, in the sta - ble

born in a sta - ble rude, and the friend - ly beasts a -
moth - er up - hill and down, I car - ried his moth - er to
man - ger for his bed, I gave him hay to
wool for his blan - ket warm, he wore my coat on
sleep that he should not cry, we cooed him to sleep, my
dark were glad to tell of the gifts they gave Em -

round him stood, Je - sus, our broth - er, strong and good.
Beth - le - hem town; I,” said the don - key, shag - gy and brown.
pil - low his head; I,” said the cow, all white and red.
Christ - mas morn; I,” said the sheep with curl - y horn.
mate and I; I,” said the dove, from the raf - ters high.
man - u - el, the gifts they gave Em - man - u - el.

WORDS: 12th cent. French carol; trans. anon.; (Lk. 2:7)
MUSIC: Medieval French melody; harm. by Carlton R. Young, 1987

ORIENTIS PARTIBUS
Irr.

Harm. © 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House

Offering our Prayer Concerns, and Joys and Thanksgivings

Rev. Jeff Munnis

Concerns:

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.

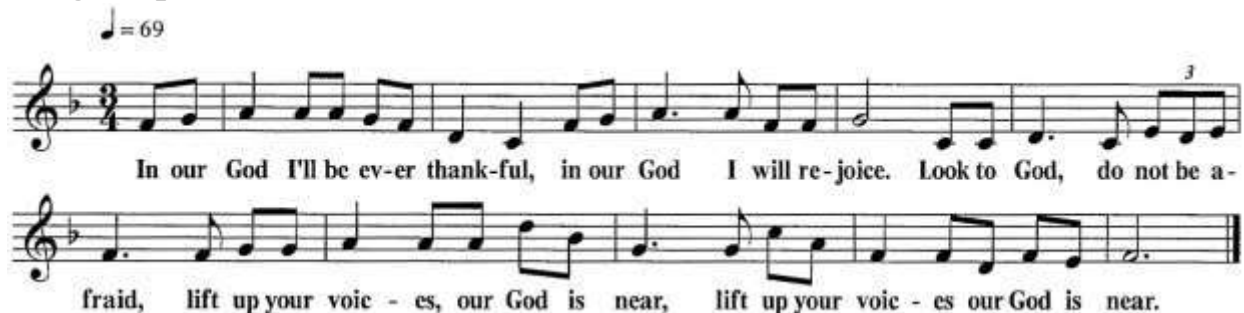
Joys and Thanksgivings:

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



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

Rev. Doug Holder, piano

"The Magnificat" by Darwin Leitz

Presentation of Offerings, and Prayer of Dedication

Loretta Martin

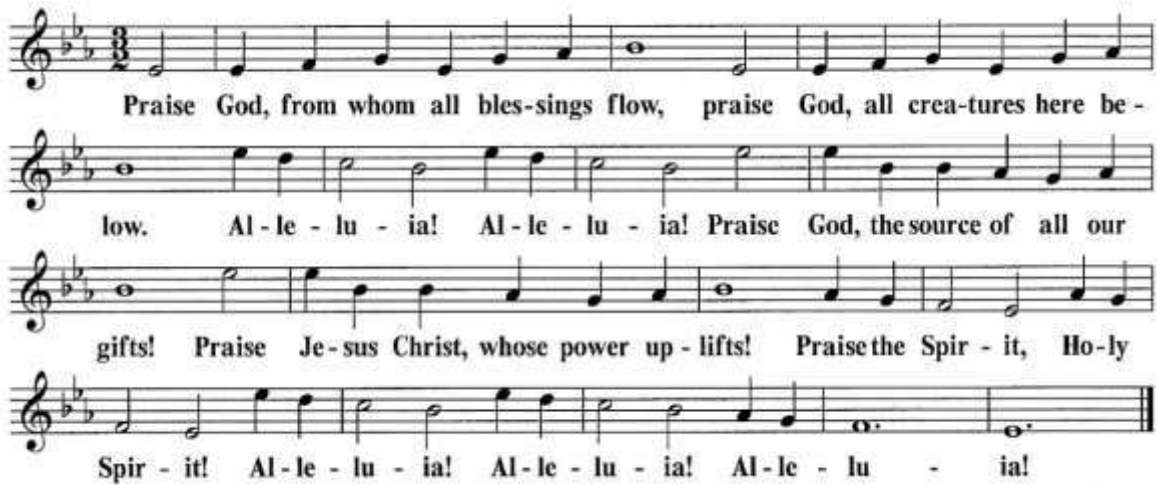
Gracious God, whatever is true we owe to your mercy. The honorable and just reflect your goodness. When we are pure, it is because you forgive us. Whatever is lovely is a gift of your grace. All of our excellence is due to your kindness. Receive now what we offer as signs of thanksgiving. **Amen.**

~ "When We Gather: A Book of Prayers for Worship" by James G. Kirk, adapted

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

*** Doxology**

Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow



The Prayer of Jesus

Rev. Jeff Munnis

Our Father, our Eternal Source, our Mother, our Creator, and our Parent in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom, your Kin-dom, your realm, and your 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, our sins and our debts, as we forgive those who trespass against us, sin against us, or are our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:

For yours is the kingdom, the Kin-dom, the realm, the dream, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

~Matthew 6:9-13, RSV

* Sending Hymn

All Things Bright and Beautiful

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Cecil F. Alexander, 1848; alt.

Unison Refrain

All things bright and beau-ti - ful, all crea-tures great and small,

All things wise and won - der - ful, our dear God made them all.

1 Each lit - tle flower that o - pens, each lit - tle bird that sings,
2 The pur - ple-head - ed moun-tain, the riv - er run - ning by,
3 The cold wind in the win - ter, the pleas-ant sum-mer sun,

to Refrain

God made their glow-ing col - ors, and made their ti - ny wings.
The sun - set, and the morn - ing that bright-ens up the sky.
The ripe fruits in the gar - den, God made them ev - ery one.

This hymn for children is based on the first article of the Apostles' Creed: "Maker of heaven and earth." The English hymnwriter Cecil Frances Alexander was married to William Alexander, who became bishop of Ireland.

Tune: ROYAL OAK 7.6.7.6, with refrain
English melody
Adapt. Martin Shaw, 1915

Benediction

Rev. Jeff Munnis

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

Rev. Doug Holder, piano

“Toda la Tierra (All the Earth is Waiting)” by Alberto Taule

Advent Prayer Group with Pastor Jeff...

Meets Wednesdays, December 4th, 11th, and 18th at 6:30pm on Zoom.

We will spend 45 minutes with a short discussion and then prayer and meditation.

Three Topics we will cover:

- **Nine Types of Prayer**
- **Ten Components of Prayer as a Spiritual Practice**
- **Combining Prayer with Meditation**

Join Meeting here:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86064815797?pwd=qc8d5NQT9Tp36lkjGhuRlwuZxnBjig.1>

Congregational Life Announcements

--A warm welcome and thank you to **Rev. Doug Holder**, piano, for sharing his musical talents with us today.

--Thank you, **Rev. Ron and Linda Lang, Paul Gibb, Loretta Martin and Alan Weaver**, for serving as readers for today's service.

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

--Thank you also to our ushers, **Ray Allen** and **Mike Robinson** for welcoming us this morning.

--Thank you to **Logan** and **Brooks** for setting up our worship space and hospitality hour.

--**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 **Ray Allen** at 405 833-1817 for assistance.

Last Week's Participation

--Souls Present at Demuth: 59 --Children: 0 --First Timers: 1

--- Facebook Live Views: 10 --Facebook Total Views: 180 --YouTube Views: N/A

Sunday Offerings

Tithes, Offerings, and Participation:

Offering, online, by mail and text: \$1,814 Electronic Giving: \$1,854

Permanence Fund: 559 Cumulative: \$342,450

Christmas Gift Cards: \$950 Cumulative: \$2,210

Year End Appeal: \$950 Cumulative: \$1,150

UCC Retirees \$315 Cumulative: \$315

--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.



--**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.

Ave Maria, by J.S. Bach and Charles Gounod

The Peace Carol by bob Beers

The Magnificat, by Darwin Leitz

Toda La Tierra, by Alberto Taule

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Ministries of Leadership and Support

--**Open Council Meetings** -- The next hybrid meeting will be December 11 at 2:00 pm PDT in the church office and on Zoom. All are welcome with a voice. Only 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 9 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**, dinoinsps@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

--The Bloom Book Club will begin discussing the book "Living Untethered, Beyond the Human Predicament" by Michael Singer. It will start on January 7, 2025, at 6:00 pm on Zoom.

--BibleBites with Rev. Jeff resumes January 8, Wednesdays at 4:00 pm in the Bloom office.

Social Action and Missions Ministry

--**Lunch served weekdays:** 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. On Thursdays, lunch is served at Our Lady of Solitude, 474 N Belardo, Palm Springs and on Fridays at Our Lady of Guadalupe, 204 S. El Segundo, in Palm Springs. Volunteers needed each day. Contact **Jim Nixon** at nixonsf@aol.com.

Our focused ministries include:

- School children's benevolence – "Shoes for Students", church camp, and Christmas gift cards.
- Relieving food insecurity – Lunch Mondays through Fridays, 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 **Jim Nixon** at nixonsf@aol.com.

**You are welcome to take this bulletin with you for reflection,
or leave it with the ushers for recycling.**

Bloom Happenings This Week						
Monday Dec. 16	Tuesday Dec. 17	Wednesday Dec. 18	Thursday Dec. 19	Friday Dec. 20	Saturday Dec. 21	Sunday Dec. 22
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 for our unhoused neighbors served at St. Paul's Episcopal 2:00pm Open Council Meeting in the Office and on Zoom 6:30pm Advent Prayer Group on Zoom	10:45am – 1:00pm Lunch served at Our Lady of Solitude	10:45am – 1:00pm Lunch served at Our Lady of Guadalupe 4:00pm Women of Bloom on Zoom		10:am Sunday Service at Demuth and on Facebook Live New Member Covenanting Sunday

God wants you to think for yourself and live for others.

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

New Member Reception

Sunday, December 22, 10:00am

See John DiNapoli if you would like to join!



Welcome

Bloom in the Desert (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. Bloom is governed congregationally according to our unique bylaws. All Bloom members and friends are ministers in our faith. Our Open Council 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

Rev. "Jeff" Munnis, Interim Minister — 415-747-9114 — jeff@bloominthedesert.org

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

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