



First Sunday of Christmas

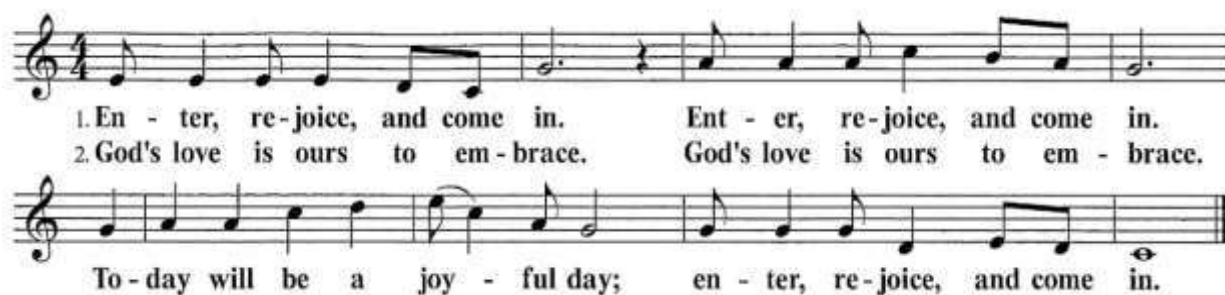
December 29, 2024

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



Welcome and News of the Congregation

Rev. Dr. Stephen Wayles

Lighting the Christ Candle

Carol Moore and Dewey Roach

Because injustice and despair threaten to overwhelm us, we pray
for hope...

**Because so many swords have not yet been beaten into
ploughshares, we pray for peace...**

Because grief and loss weigh so heavily, we pray for joy...
**Because hatred is still so strong, and because
people all over the world are suffering, we pray for
love.**

God has come to us as a child. Christ is present in our world.
**May the light and the fire from these candles burn away
everything that is preventing the God of hope and peace and joy and love
from being born among us...**

Brothers and sisters, and non-binary siblings, be not afraid, even now — even now — the
light of Christ is overwhelming the world!



Music for Centering

Malcolm Swan, piano

“Jul, Jul, Strålande Jul”

Call to Worship

Lynda Toland

Living among us, the Word is made flesh; Logos, full of grace and truth. Reason takes shape and builds a home here, the embodiment of God's Love.

**Alleluia! We know God still speaks! With excitement! With enthusiasm!
Always loving and just. Creating new life!**

Ancient angels sang, "Glory!" God is with us! We know now that nothing can separate us from God's love! We hope that Love will one day lead all humanity into:

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

* Opening Hymn

129

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

*German and Latin, 14th century
Transl. John Mason Neale, 1855; alt.*

Descant

3 Good Chris - tian friends, re-joyce with heart and soul and voice;

1 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joyce with heart and soul and voice;
2 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joyce with heart and soul and voice;
3 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joyce with heart and soul and voice;

now you need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!

now give heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to-day;
now you know of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
now you need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!

The musical score is written for three parts: Soprano, Alto, and Bass. It begins with a descant in 8/8 time. The lyrics are in English, with some words in German and Latin. The music is in G major and 4/4 time. The lyrics are: 3 Good Christian friends, re-joyce with heart and soul and voice; 1 Good Christian friends, re - joyce with heart and soul and voice; 2 Good Christian friends, re - joyce with heart and soul and voice; 3 Good Christian friends, re - joyce with heart and soul and voice; now you need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save! now give heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to-day; now you know of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this! now you need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!



This carol is very old. Heinrich Suso, a German mystic who died in 1366, related a vision in which angels, singing this carol, drew him into a dance. The words were originally macaronic, combining Latin phrases with the vernacular.

Tune: IN DULCI JUBILO 6.6.7.7.8.5.5.
*German melody, 14th century
 Harm. adapt. from John Stainer, 1871
 Descant, H. A. Chambers, 1931*

In Faith We Open Our Hearts to Ministry

Prayer for Good and Growth

In preparation for making our New Year Intentions, let us offer this prayer based on Today's reading from the letter to the Colossians Leader: Because we belong to God and one another, let us pray a New Year's Intention for Growth, based one of the Scriptures appointed for the Sunday before New Year's Day. ~Colossians 3:10-16

Dear God: Help us to put aside whatever of our old self and past deeds that haven't worked for us or those around us. Help us to put on a new self, one that grows in knowledge as it is formed anew in your image. In your image, loving Creator, externals don't matter, there is no Jew or Greek, no Slave or Free, no Male or Female. There is Only Christ who is all and in us all. Because you love all people, you ask the same of us. Help us in this coming year- to clothe ourselves with heartfelt compassion; with kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Help us to be patient with ourselves and with others. Help us to forgive one in the same way that you have forgiven us. Above all else, help us to clothe ourselves with your love, which will make all these other qualities possible.

In this year, let peace reign in our hearts. Whatever else may happen, help us to be people of gratitude for the good that you give to us. We ask this in the name of Jesus, whose birth, life, and presence in our lives we celebrate in this joyous Season of Christmas. Amen.

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.)

Loving creator of everything, wonderful counselor for everyone, hear now our sincere and silent prayers.

~ Silence ~

To all our silent prayers let the people say amen.

Amen.

Words of Encouragement

"Sing gratefully to God in Psalms, Hymns and Songs of the Spirit. And whatever you do, whether in speech or in action, do it in the name of Jesus, giving thanks to God through him."

~Colossians 3:17

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

1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26

Carl Toland

“Samuel, ... would minister before YHWH wearing a linen ephod around his waist. Each year Samuel’s mother would bring him a small cloak, when she went up to sacrifice with Elkanah. Eli would bless Elkanah and Hannah, and say, “May YHWH grant you children by Hannah in place of the one you gave to YHWH.” Then they would return to their home.

As young Samuel grew up, he increasingly grew in stature and in favor with God and the people.
~Inclusive Bible Version

Here ends the Hebrew scripture reading.

*** Gospel Reading**

Luke 2:41-52

Ray Allen

The parents of Jesus used to go every year to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover, and when Jesus was twelve, they went up for the celebration as was their custom. As they were returning at the end of the feast, the child Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, unbeknownst to Mary and Joseph. Thinking Jesus was in the caravan, they continued their journey for the day, looking for him among their relatives and acquaintances.

Not finding Jesus, they returned to Jerusalem in search of him. On the third day, they came upon Jesus in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. All who heard Jesus were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

When Mary and Joseph saw Jesus, they were astonished, and Mary said, “Son, why have you done this to us? You see that your father and I have been so worried, looking for you.” Jesus said to them, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I had to be in my Abba’s house?”

But they didn’t understand what he told them. Then Jesus went down with them to Nazareth and was obedient to them. Mary stored these things in her heart, and Jesus grew in wisdom, in years and in favor with God and people alike.
~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. Dr. Stephen Wayles

Hymn of Response

153 Who Would Think That What Was Needed

Isa. 11:1-6; Matt. 2:1-11; Luke 2:8-14

John Bell and Graham Maule, 1990; alt.



1 Who would think that what was need-ed to trans-form and save the earth
 2 Shep-herds watch and sag-es won-der, mon-archs scorn and an-gels sing;
 3 Cen-tu-ries of skill and sci-ence span the past from which we move,



might not be a plan or ar-my proud in pur-pose, proved in worth?
 such a place as none would reck-on hosts a ho-ly, help-less thing;
 yet ex-per-i-ence ques-tions wheth-er with such prog-ress we im-prove.



Who would think, de-spite de-ri-sion, that a child should lead the way?
 Sta-ble beasts and pass-ing strang-ers watch a ba-by laid in hay:
 In our search for sense and mean-ing, lest our hopes and hu-mor fray,



God sur-pris-es earth with heav-en, com-ing here on Christ-mas Day.
 God sur-pris-es earth with heav-en, com-ing here on Christ-mas Day.
 God sur-pris-es earth with heav-en, com-ing here on Christ-mas Day.

This song was written by The Iona Community in Scotland, which frequently develops hymn texts through a collaborative process, often employing traditional tunes from the British Isles such as "Scarlet Ribbons."

Tune: SCARLET RIBBONS 8.7.8.7.D.
English traditional melody
 Arr. John Bell and others, 1990

Words and Arrangement Copyright © 1990, Wild Goose Publications/Iona Community. Used by permission of G.I.A. Publications, Inc.

Offering our Prayer Concerns, and Joys and Thanksgivings

Rev. Dr. Stephen Wayles

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.

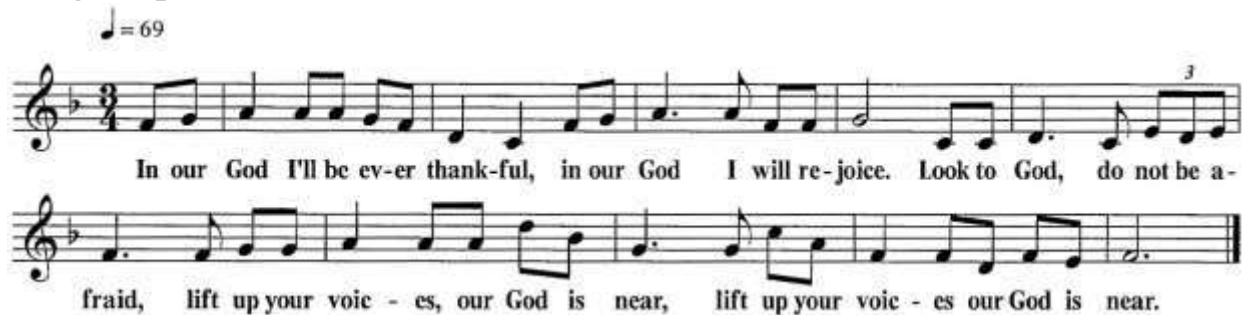
Joys and Thanksgivings:

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

Malcolm Swan, piano

"We Three Kings"

Presentation of Offerings, and Prayer of Dedication

Lynda Toland

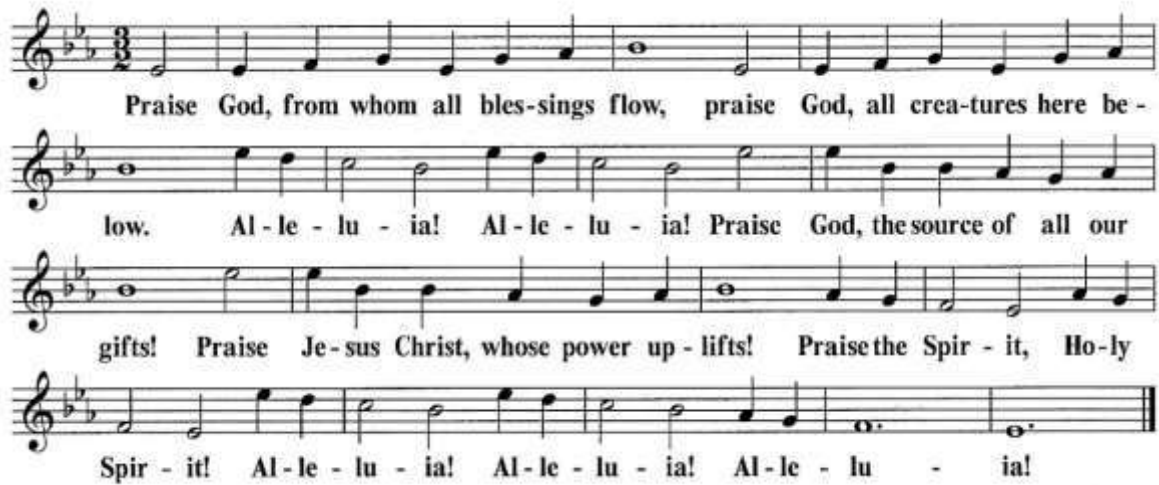
Giver of every good and perfect gift, tribute and glad praises we bring to you. Let the words of our mouths proclaim the dawn of redemption Christ inaugurates. Use our talents to spread abroad the good news of his reconciling love. Accept the gifts we offer to further his teachings, so that all people may find in him the abundant life he so richly promised.

~When we Gather: A Book of Prayers for Worship, James G. Kirk

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. Dr. Stephen Wayles

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

246

Joy to the World



1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
 2. Joy to the world, the Sav - ior reigns!
 3. No more let sins and sor - rows grow,
 4. He rules the world with truth and grace,



Let earth re - ceive her King; let
 Let all their songs em - ploy; while
 nor thorns in - fest the ground; he
 and makes the na - tions prove the



ev - ery heart pre - pare him room,
 fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
 comes to make his bless - ings flow
 glo - ries of his righ - teous - ness,

and heaven and na - ture sing, and
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re -
 far as the curse is found, far and
 and won - ders of his love, and

and heaven and na - ture sing, and
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re -
 far as the curse is found, far and
 won - ders of his love, and
 sing,
 joy,
 found,
 love,
 and re - peat as the curse is
 won - ders of his

heaven, and heaven, and na - ture sing.
 re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 as, far as the curse is found.
 won - ders, won - ders of his love.
 sing,
 joy,
 found,
 love,

WORDS: Isaac Watts, 1719 (Ps. 98:4-9)
 MUSIC: Arr. from G. F. Handel, 1741, by Lowell Mason, 1848

ANTIOCH
 CM with Repeat

Benediction

Rev. Dr. Stephen Wayles

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

Malcolm Swan, piano

“Joy to the World”

Congregational Life Announcements

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

--Thank you, **Carol Moore, Dewey Roach, Lynda Toland, Carl Toland and Ray Allen**, for serving as readers for today's service. A Special thank you to Rev. Dr. Stephen Wayles for providing our commentary this morning and leading portions of the service..

--Thank you to **JacksonENZler** 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.

--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.

--Those wishing to donate flowers may contact **Ray Allen** at 405 833-1817 for assistance.

Last Week's Participation

--Souls Present at Demuth: 66 --Children: 0 --First Timers: N/A

--- Facebook Live Views: 17 --Facebook Total Views: 160 --YouTube Views: N/A

Sunday Offerings

Tithes, Offerings, and Participation:

Offering, online, by mail and text: \$1,803 Electronic Giving: \$1,399

Permanence Fund: \$100 Cumulative: \$342,797

Year End Appeal: \$900 Cumulative: \$3,550

UCC Retirees: \$47 Cumulative: \$562

--Please sign up for **Ralph's Community Rewards**. Choose Bloom in the Desert UCC (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.

Jul, Jul Strålande Jul, Scandinavian Carol by Gustafson Nordqvist

We Three Kings musical setting by John Rutter

Joy to the World, by Handel arr. by John Ness Beck

--**All music** contained in this worship service is Reprinted / Podcast / Streamed with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-700000. All rights reserved.

Ministries of Leadership and Support

--**Open Council Meetings** -- The next hybrid meeting will be January 15 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**, 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

--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 on Zoom..

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:

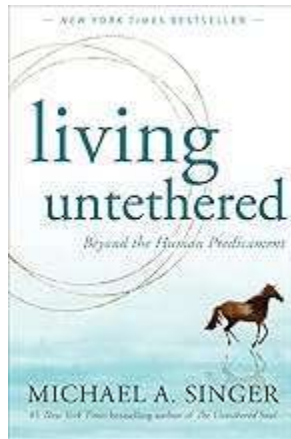
- School children's benevolence – "Shoes for Students", church camp, and Christmas gift cards.
- Relieving food insecurity – Lunch Mondays through Fridays, food bank support.
- National church's wider mission – "5 for 5" UCC mission offerings, disaster relief.
- Spiritual and personal development – worship, 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. 30	Tuesday Dec. 31	Wednesday Jan. 1	Thursday Jan. 2	Friday Jan. 3	Saturday Jan. 4	Sunday Jan. 5
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 New Year's Eve	10:45am – 1:00pm Lunch for our unhoused neighbors served at St. Paul's Episcopal Happy New Year	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

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

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



--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 on Zoom.



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