



Bloom
in the
Desert
Ministries



September 24, 2023

Welcome

Bloom in the Desert Ministries (Bloom) is a United Church of Christ (UCC) with Methodist beginnings. This liberal Protestant church was born in 2002, as an

independent ministry in collaboration with Methodist organizations hoping to start and promote inclusive Christian church communities. 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, open and affirming (ONA), peace, and justice congregation. Bloom is a member of the ONA Coalition (UCC) 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 nine Open Leadership meetings and three congregation meetings yearly provide leadership and decision making to empower Bloom's 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 10am

Demuth Community Center — 3601 E. Mesquite Avenue, Palm Springs, CA 92264

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

Rev. Dr. Kevin A. Johnson, Minister — 760-992-4346 — minister@bloominthedesert.org

Ken Forney, Music Director — 608-445-6767 — ken.forney@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

2002 ~ 2023



Rev. Kev and Mike, early years, Bloom Sunday services outside in the rose garden at Palapas Art Garden and Nursery in Palm Springs, California.

Rev. Kev as “Maleficent” for a Bloom Halloween fundraising party. Costume by Mike Shear. We remain grateful to our generous hosts, Tim and Chuck.



Mike and Rev. Kev at Rooftop reception for 2019 UCC Southern California Nevada Conference annual gathering at Chapman University near Disneyland.

Mike and Rev. Kev at a Bloom Spring Fling Cabaret and Silent Auction fundraiser in the pre-Covid years, Desert Princess Hotel, Cathedral City, California.





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Bloom in the Desert Ministries

**United Church of Christ
Palm Springs, CA**

Celebrating the Ministries of Rev. Dr. Kev and Mike Shear September 24, 2023

For Facebook check-ins, etc., the Demuth Community Center
Wi-Fi password is: D3muthP@rk
Please rise as you are able in body and spirit.

9:50am Pre-Service Music

Mike Welden, piano

“Finlandia,” by Jean Sibelius, arr. by Douglas Trowbridge, ©1985 by Birdwing Music

“It Is Well With My Soul,” by Philip P. Bliss, arr. by Harlan Rogers and Scotty Price, ©1986 by Marantha! Music

“Morning Has Broken” arr. by Dr. Denis Moreen

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

Rev. Dr. Kevin A. Johnson

Music for Centering

“In This Very Room” BloomTones, directed by Ken Forney

Words and music by Ron and Carol Harris ©1979 Ron Harris Music

Mike Welden, piano

Call to Worship

Moderator Lynda

Toland

God, today you call us through your spirit to gather in celebration.

Open our hearts to feel acceptance and respect for our differences. We are all different and yet we share a yearning, which touches us and compels us to join in unity with one another.

Open our minds to learn from one another and use our knowledge to bridge gaps, building a community of love, faith, healing, truth, and justice for all.

Open our spirits to share the message of your spirit.

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

~Spirit of the Lakes UCC, from Shaping Sanctuary, adapted

Words for peace in various languages: Hawaiian, Hebrew, Arabic, South African, Ukrainian and Russian, Chinese, Spanish and Portuguese, English.

Opening Hymn

Morning Has Broken 145

Unison

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'Morning Has Broken'. It is written for unison in 4/4 time. The score consists of two systems of music. The first system has a treble clef and a bass clef. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are: '1. Morn-ing has bro - ken like the first morn - ing; 2. Sweet the rain's new fall sun - lit from heav - en, 3. Mine is the sun - light! Mine is the morn - ing'. The second system also has a treble clef and a bass clef. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are: 'black-bird has spo - ken like the first bird, like the first dew - fall on the first grass. born of the one light E - den saw play!'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and accidentals. The key signature is one flat (F major or D minor). The tempo is marked as 'Moderator'.

C Am Dm G F C

1. Morn-ing has bro - ken like the first morn - ing;
2. Sweet the rain's new fall sun - lit from heav - en,
3. Mine is the sun - light! Mine is the morn - ing

Am Em/G F Em Dm G

black-bird has spo - ken like the first bird,
like the first dew - fall on the first grass.
born of the one light E - den saw play!

C F C Am Dm/F

Praise for the sing - ing! Praise for the morn - ing!
 Praise for the sweet - ness of the wet gar - den,
 Praise with e - la - tion, praise ev - ery morn - ing,

D7/F# C/G F G7 C

Praise for them, spring - ing fresh from the Word!
 sprung in com - plete - ness where his feet pass.
 God's re - cre - a - tion of the new day!

WORDS: Eleanor Farjeon, 1931 (Lam. 3:22-23)
 MUSIC: Trad. Gaelic melody; harm. by Carlton R. Young, 1988

BUNESSAN
 55.54 D

Words by permission of David Higham Associates, Ltd.; harm. © 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House

In Faith We Open Our Hearts to Ministry

Prayer for Good and Growth

Now in prayer, we welcome God's spiritual embrace. Together we say:

Living God, you stir all creation to be very good. As you welcome us into your heart, we lay our burdens down and raise our praise to you. Season us with your grace and flavor us with your mercy. Remind us to pray for those who suffer and care for those who are sick. Blend and bind us together, so we become peaceful and strengthened to serve our communities as the renewing incarnation of Christ, here and around the world. Holy Spirit, help us remember to offer words of gratitude for the gift of life and the gifts we receive in our lives. If we start to judge others or neglect the heart of our relationships, help us regain the saltiness of your teachings and the excitement of spiritual service. Flavor us with your love. Knead us with your mercy and grace. Sprinkle us with the spices of compassion and commitment. Then "leaven" us with your forgiveness and mercy. As such in your creation, we are ready to nourish this world. Amen.

(Mary Scifres Ministries, 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.)

Womb of creation, God of no borders and many names, receive now our silent prayers.

~ Silence ~

To all our silent prayers let the people say amen.

Amen.

Words of Encouragement

In times of change and anxiety, remember Jesus' walking through the waves and fierce winds hastening to reassure the disciples. He said, "Don't worry, it's me! "Don't be afraid!"

(Matthew 14:27)

Amen. 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.
lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah.

The Word Informs Our Living with Grace and Power

Hebrew Scripture Reading

Exodus 16:2-4a, 9-15 Fmr. Moderator Linda Lang

They began to complain against Moses and Aaron there in the wilderness. The people of Israel said to them, "If only we had died by YHWH's hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat next to pots of meat and ate our bread 'til we were filled! But now you have brought the whole community out into the wilderness to die of hunger!"

Then YHWH said to Moses, "Look, I will rain down bread from heaven for you.

Then Moses said to Aaron, "Tell the whole Israelite community, 'Present yourselves before YHWH, who has heard your complaints.'"

As Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community, they looked toward the desert, and there was the glory of YHWH appearing in the form of a cloud. Then YHWH spoke to Moses and said, "I have heard the complaining of the people of Israel. Say this to them: 'In the evening you will eat meat, and in the morning, you will have your fill of bread. Then you will know that I, YHWH, am your God.'"

So, it came about that in the evening quail flew in and all around the camp. And in the morning, there was a layer of dew all around the camp; when the layer of dew evaporated, there on the surface of the desert were flakes of something: delicate, powdery, fine as frost.

When they saw this, the people of Israel said to each other, “What is it?” —not knowing what it was. But Moses told them, “This is the bread YHWH has given you to eat.

~Inclusive Language Version

An Interfaith Word

“Bread for the Journey”

Rabbi David Lazar

Gospel Reading

Matthew 20 8-16

Michael

Shear

When evening came, the owner said to the overseer, “Call the workers and give them their pay, but begin with the last group and end with the first.” When those hired late in the afternoon came up, they received a full day’s pay, and when the first group appeared they assumed they would get more. Yet they all received the same daily wage.



Thereupon they complained to the owner, ‘This last group did only an hour’s work, but you’ve put them on the same basis as those who worked a full day in the scorching heat.’”

“My friends,” said the owner to those who voiced this complaint, “I do you no injustice. You agreed on the usual wage, didn’t you? Take your pay and go home. I intend to give this worker who was hired last the same pay as you. I’m free to do as I please with my money, aren’t I? Or are you envious because I am generous?”

Thus, the last will be first and the first will be last.

~Inclusive Language Version

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

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Mentor’s Word

“From the Beginning...Generosity!”

Rev. Dr. Sharon R. Graff

Co-founders’ Word

Rev. Dr. Kevin A. Johnson and Micheal P. Shear

Offering our Prayer Concerns, and Joys and Thanksgivings

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

♩ = 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.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 3/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 3/4 time signature. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 69. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are written below the notes. The second staff continues the melody and lyrics. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' above it.

(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 "The Times They Are A-Changin'" Mike Welden, piano
by Bob Dylan, ©1963, 1964 by Warner Bros, Inc, renewed 1991, 1992 by Special Rider Music, USA

Reception of Offerings and Prayer of Dedication

Linda Lang

These gifts, God, we dedicate to you and your work. This is not all we offer. We also commit our time and all of who we are to your Spirit. Accept these gifts as an offering of, and for your family. Amen.

~Original Mentor Rev. Gregory R. Dell (1945-2016)

(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 bles-sings flow, praise God, all crea-tures 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 image shows four staves of musical notation in 3/8 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and a 3/8 time signature. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the notes. The second staff continues the melody and lyrics. The third staff continues the melody and lyrics. The fourth staff continues the melody and lyrics.

The Great Thanksgiving

Rev. Key: God is with you.

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.



Emr. Moderator 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:

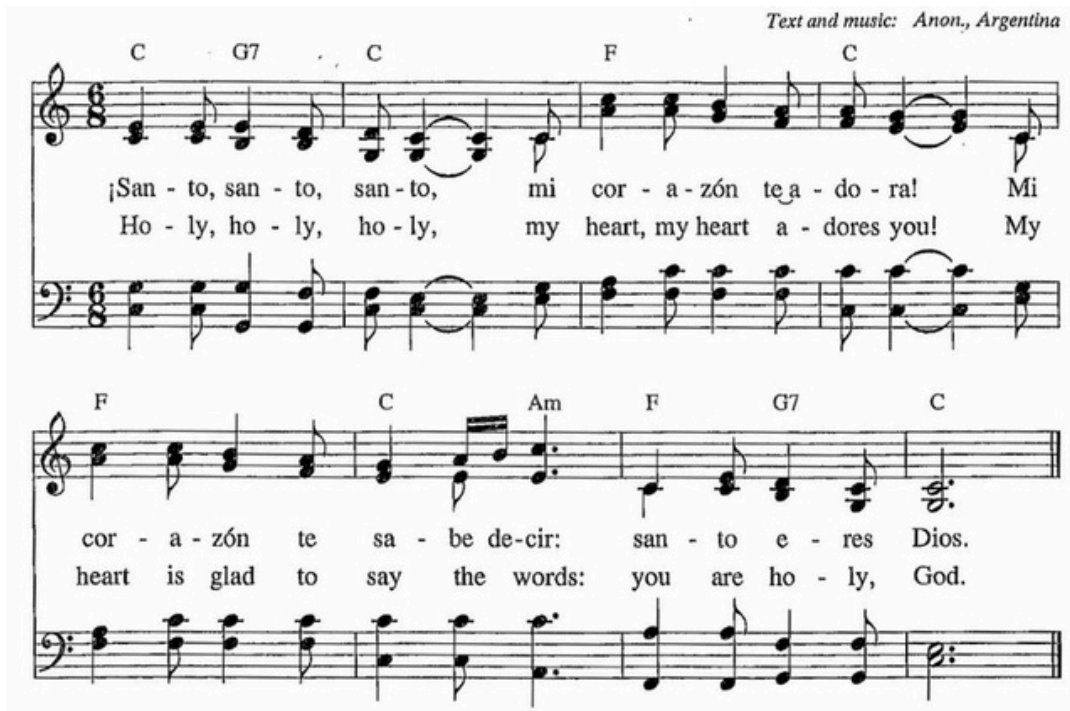
“I give you a new commandment: Love one another. And you’re to love one another the way I have loved you. This is how all will know that you’re my disciples: that you truly love one another.”

Therefore, we celebrate you, joining our voices with the wind and the 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!

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.

Reader Mike Shear: 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,

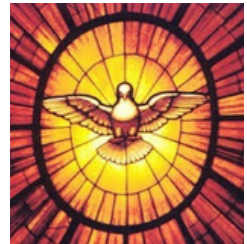
“This is my work and my life, for you and with you. Take it all of you, and do this remembering me.”

Reader Fmr. Moderator John DiNapoli 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.”

Reader Mike Shear: 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 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 at two stations.)

Communion Music

“Panis Angelicus” JR Rasch, tenor Ken Forney, piano

Music by César Frank, ©1928 J Fisher & Bro

Prayer of Jesus (You may join hands)

**Beloved, our God, revealed in the heavens,
let us honor your name in all its holy splendor.**

May your dominion come during our lifetime.

**May your purpose be fulfilled on earth as your will governs
the heavens.**

**Give us today the bread we need,
and in your abundance let us feed each other.**

Forgive the harm we have done, as we forgive those who have harmed us.

When temptation is near, keep us faithful to you.

When evil surrounds us, be our savior.

**For authority, power, and glory belong to you, and you alone,
now and forever. Amen.**



~Paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer, The Hour of Prayer, ©2020 by Andrew Lang

(Please be seated.)

Ritual of Endings and Beginnings

Our Moderator Debby Lara-Toney: Our community is constantly changing. People come and go. People commit themselves to one another. Loved ones and friends among us come to the end of their lives.

Individuals move into our community and church life, which enhances our life and expands our ministry. Others leave us, moving to new places, new experiences, and new opportunities.

Fmr. Moderator Debby Lara-Toney: It is important and right we recognize these times of passage as endings and beginnings. Today we are sharing a time of farewell with our beloved co-founders, who are leaving.

Moderator Lynda Toland: Siblings gathered today as this church, the Rev. Dr. Kevin A Johnson and Micheal P. Shear are the cofounders of this Coachella Valley congregation, which was first gathered in Palm Springs on September 18, 2002, as an outreach ministry of Broadway United Methodist Church in Chicago and the Church Within A Church Movement. As our congregation affiliated with the United Church of Christ on October 29, 2005, this local church called the Rev. Kevin A. Johnson to serve as the first called minister. Rev. Kev served as a "dual-affiliation" minister until September 11, 2013, when he was granted United Church of Christ Authorized Minister and Privilege of Call status. He was conferred a Doctor of Ministry on May 31, 2020, and has served us faithfully for 21 years.

Rev. Dr. Kev: I thank Bloom in the Desert Ministries United Church of Christ members and friends for the loving kindness and support shown to Mike and me these past 21 years. I ask forgiveness for the mistakes I made. I am grateful for the ways my leadership was embraced and am proud of the ways this congregation has grown. As Mike and I leave, we carry with us precious memories of times spent well together.

We receive your thankfulness, offer our forgiveness, and accept that you both now leave for the next phases of your lives. We are grateful for your time among us. We ask your forgiveness for our mistakes. Your influence on our faith and faithfulness will not leave us with your departure.

Rev. Dr. Kev and Mike: We forgive you and we accept your gratitude. We trust our time together with you, and our parting, to further infuse God's love in this community and our lives. With gratefulness and hope, we return to the church these symbols of our shared ministry. (Keys returned to Stephen Hodge, Facilities Ministry Coordinator; credit card returned to Paul Gibb, Treasurer).

(Please rise as you are able.)

***Vows of Release and Encouragement**

Moderator Lynda Toland: Members and friends of Bloom in the Desert Ministries United Church of Christ, do you release Rev. Dr. Kevin A. Johnson from the duties and relationships as your pastor, and do you release Kevin and Mike together from their Bloom covenants?

We do, with the help of God, and with a hearty “well done, good and faithful ones!”

Fmr. Moderator Debby Lara-Toney: Do you offer your encouragement for their lives in future retirement years as they unfold in new ways?

We do, with the help of God, and with deep gratitude for these two men.

Fmr. Moderator/Eastern Assn. Rep. John DiNapoli: Do you, Rev. Dr. Kevin A Johnson, release this local church from turning to you and depending on you as our called minister and pastor?

Rev. Dr. Kev I do, with the help of God.

Fmr. Moderator Debby Lara-Toney: Mike and Kevin, will both of you offer prayerful encouragement for Bloom's continued congregational ministry here, for Bloom's wider church involvement, and for healthy relationships with future authorized ministers called to serve us?

Rev. Dr. Kev and Mike: We will, with the help of God.

***Everyone:**

God of us all, we offer thanks for laughter and tears; for the sharing of story and for having fun; for 21 years of memory-making; for worship, learning, and service creating a beloved community extending out into this valley and the world. Embracing responsibility for the ministry, we continue your work.

We promise to pray for one another as our once shared journey now becomes two pathways. We vow to take what we learned together and put it to good use on the way forward. We pray together. Your everlasting love for all is trustworthy. We know, “the times, they are a-changing.” Guide each of us to trust the goodness of future, which rests in your care and our community.

The times we gather in your name are manifest in our laughter and tears, our hopes and disappointments, our concerns and joys, our successes and failures. With your holy Spirit, comfort and guide us as we cherish memories, learn from them, and move in new directions, until “that day” when we are completely one with you and with each other. In relationship with Jesus and one another, and for good purposes we pray. Amen.



Sending Hymn

433

In the Bulb There Is a Flower

Natalie Sleeth, 1985

Unison

1 In the bulb there is a flow - er; in the seed, an ap - ple tree;
 2 There's a song in ev - ery si - lence, seek - ing word and mel - o - dy;
 3 In our end is our be - gin - ning; in our time, in - fin - i - ty;

in co - coons, a hid - den prom - ise: but - ter - flies will soon be free!
 there's a dawn for ev - ery dark - ness, bring - ing hope to you and me.
 in our doubt there is be - liev - ing; in our life, e - ter - ni - ty.

In the cold and snow of win - ter there's a spring that waits to be,
 From the past will come the fu - ture; what it holds, a mys - ter - y,
 In our death, a res - ur - rec - tion; at the last, a vic - to - ry,

un - re - vealed un - til its sea - son, some - thing God a - lone can see.
 un - re - vealed un - til its sea - son, some - thing God a - lone can see.
 un - re - vealed un - til its sea - son, some - thing God a - lone can see.

Natalie Sleeth composed her "Hymn of Promise" first as a choral anthem and then adapted it to this version for congregational singing. It was dedicated to her husband, Ronald Sleeth, who died shortly after she completed it.

Tune: PROMISE 8.7.8.7.D.
 Natalie Sleeth, 1985

Copyright © 1986 by Hope Publishing Company

(Please be seated.)

Musical Benediction and Blessing

Moderators: As this worship service ends with sending, our continued service begins. What does God need from us for our future together?

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

Priestly Blessing

Rabbi David Lazar

May YHWH bless you and keep you!

May YHWH's face shine upon you and be gracious to you!

May YHWH behold you with love and give you peace. ~Numbers 6:24-26

Choral Blessing

Bloom Tones directed by Ken Forney, Mike Welden, piano
“Peace Be with You, Wherever You Go.”

Words and music by Steve Kupferschmid, ©2012 BLP Choral Music

Sending

Rev. Dr. Kev: My dear siblings and friends in faith, will you go from here into your communities and the world to be the people of God in Christ's name?

We will. Amen!

Passing of the Peace

(Please rise as you are able.)

Let us rise and safely offer to one another signs of grace and peace and go in peace. Amen.

Postlude piano

“Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”

Mike Welden,

Arr. by Phillip Keverin, ©2005 by Hal Leonard Corp.

Please join us! Everyone is welcome and invited to the reception immediately following this service.

Refreshments are being served.

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

Liturgical Guides

Lynda Toland, moderator 2022 – present.

John DiNapoli, moderator 2016 – 2019, UCC SoCal Nevada Conference Eastern Assn. rep.

Linda Lang, moderator 2014 – 2016.

Debby Lara-Toney first moderator 2005 – 2007.

Reflections

Rabbi David Lazar, Or Hamidbar Spiritual Community in Palm Springs, interfaith colleague.

Rev. Dr. Saron Rae Graff, Bloom member, Mentor of congregation when affiliating with the United church of Christ and when Bloom received a three-year Strengthen the Church grant.

Rev. Dr. Kev's Doctor of Ministry dissertation-project advisor.

Music

Ken Forney, music director, 2019 to present.

Mike Welden, piano, attended Bloom's first worship service, March 9, 2002.

BloomTones Choir

Past Moderators with us in spirit

Jack McClelland, 2019– 2022 (Now eternal).

Bill Davisson, 2011 –2014. (Relocated).

Stafford Fredericks, 2011 (Relocated).

Richard Bentley, 2008-2011 (Relocated).

Mary Fowlie, 2007 – 2008 (Now eternal).

Worship Bulletin

Many thanks and kudos go to Administrative Assistant Bill Wallace, 2018 to present, for his years of faithful work, ready smile, and tested patience with Rev. Dr. Kev's iterative-changes document review practices.

Mike Shear as a 2021 post-Easter butterfly.



Mike heads up the 2010 Chinese New Year dragon entrance.



Congregational Life Announcements

--Thankyou to **Nick Wass** and **JacksonENZler** for handling the A/V technical aspects for today's service.

Thank you also to our ushers, **Mike Kreiser** and **Carol Moore**, for welcoming us this morning.

--**Flowers on the Worship Center**, symbolic of the living Christ are offered to the glory of God by **Ray Allen**.

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

Last Week's Participation

--Souls Present at Demuth: 52 --Children: 0 --First Timers: 0

--- Facebook Live Views: 20 -Facebook Total Views: 105 --YouTube Views: 19

Sunday Offerings

Tithes, Offerings, and Participation:

Offering, online, by mail, and text: \$2,438 Electronic Giving: \$1,327

Permanence Fund: \$176 Cumulative: \$321,660

Bring-a-Friend BloomNight Potluck

Friday, October 6 — 6:30-9:30pm

At Bill Wallace and Larry Metcalf's home in Desert Hot Springs

Plan on an evening of food and fun with friends.

Invite a friend to join us and experience the joy of our Bloom community.

Bloom Book Clubbers

We will resume on Tuesday, October 10, at 6pm on Zoom with this book:

How to Begin When Your World is Ending: A Spiritual Field Guide to Joy Despite Everything by Rev. Molly Baskett

If you would like further information or receive the Zoom link, please contact Gary Lange at GaryLange13@gmail.com

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**, dinojnps@gmail.com or **Bill Wallace** at adminassistant@bloominthedesert.org.

Through the years...



2004 Earliest photo of an Open Leadership meeting.



2023 Recent Open Leadership meeting.



Welcome 2023. Treasurer Paul Gibb,



Rev. Dr. Kev, Clerk Carl Toland,
Moderator Lynda Toland.

2019 Mardis Gras Sunday.

2021 Covid years Mardi Gras Sunday.



2022 Pre-Pride parade coffee.

Mike and Kevin



When a Pastor Leaves the Church...

This wise instruction was read by Moderator Lynda Toland at the Open Leadership meeting on August 9, 2023. We are sharing with everyone.

From the United Church of Christ booklet--Section on Theological Grounding.

Every ministry has a beginning and an end. Moses and Elijah concluded their earthly ministries, entrusting their authority to others and believing that God would provide other leaders who could carry on the work of ministry and leadership to that community. Jesus ministered as an itinerant, always moving from place to place; in Mark 1:38 he says, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came to do."

(Apostle) Paul planted many churches and empowered other leaders to shepherd those communities after his departure; while his letters to those communities were filled with teaching, they also contained encouragement for those churches to listen to their current leaders.

Even Jesus endowed the Church with the power to act in his name when he left earth following his ascension. Similarly, when pastors conclude their ministry in a setting, they depart in faith that Jesus' words at the end of the Gospel of Matthew are true for them and for the congregations they depart: "Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." This allows departing pastors to take their leave, trusting that God will continue to take care of those whom the pastor has served.

This trust in God is especially essential at the time of departure, when the reality of the new boundaries becomes real and the temptations to cross those boundaries increase. These departure guidelines are meant to facilitate a faithful leave-taking on the part of the pastor, freeing everyone to live into a new future as ministries move in new directions separate from each other.

Dear God, please be with us, guide us, and teach us how to best send Kevin and Mike into retirement from Bloom in the Desert Ministries. Help us to grow, and nurture us, and those who join us, so we may continue Rev. Dr. Kev's vision when he and Mike planted Bloom.

We ask for your help during this process.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Lynda Toland, Moderator

