



# SONSHINE

Palm Springs Presbyterian Church Newsletter

Winter Edition – February 2023

Contributed by  
Elder Kay Chabot

## Jeremiah 29:11

*For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*

When I began volunteering at Mizell Center last February, I truly had no idea all they did to help people in need in our community. I mostly knew the Center as the place where Seniors and others gather to socialize or share congregational meals, play Bridge or Canasta, and take various classes ranging from aerobics to Zumba. Indeed, the Center does all that, but so very much more. Most people are aware that Mizell provides “Meals on Wheels” to those who qualify for the program but may be mostly unaware of the Center’s mission for anyone challenged by housing, food, health, and other insecurity matters.

At my weekly five-hour shift at the front desk, I never know what will be on the other end of the many calls I receive and direct; the wide range of assistance that can be provided by the highly trained, capable, and caring case managers who work with private funding as well as County, State, and Federal programs to assist people in need is truly astounding. My volunteer job very quickly became a weekly inspiration to me.



Contributed by  
Elder Carole Roger

## Inspiration for Adoration

*From “Certain Peace for Uncertain Times” – by Shirley Dobson*

There are ways to discover adoration for the Lord. The most obvious source is the pages of Scripture. The Psalms especially, are filled with marvelous descriptions and examples of praise to our heavenly Father. Psalm 89 begins, “*I will sing of the Lord’s great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known throughout all generations.*”

We can also turn to songs of praise in a hymnbook (to make Alex happy : ) as well as many excellent books that explore God’s character and attributes. Of course, worshipping with fellow believers at church can be a tremendous source of inspiration. Setting aside family time for praise and worship may bring out heartfelt moments of heavenly acclamation.”

When we gather for a holiday as a family, friends, or church family the Dobsons suggest we share at least one blessing we received from the past year for which we are especially thankful. It is a time to appreciate each other and God. These moments always remind us just how much God has given us all. Let’s share with one another the blessings from last year!



Contributed by  
Elder Peggy Kueffer

### **Bunker**

The inspiration I have been so very blessed to experience for the past 12 years is a little 18 pound, fluffy white, four-legged miracle named Bunker. I adopted Bunker from a puppy mill in Missouri in 2010. His litter of five was going to be euthanized because each one of the puppies had a slight deformative and could not be sold for show dogs. Bunker was bow-legged. My friends adopted his three sisters and brother, and I was blessed with Bunker.



Once Bunker and I settled into puppyhood, I was beginning to think about what I would do once I retired from my career. I knew I wanted to contribute in some way so decided Bunker and I would launch into dog therapy together. Having no dog training, but always loved animals being raised on a farm, I felt we could take on this challenge together.

After our first year together, Bunker and I completed our training and passed our tests to be a certified dog therapy team with Animal Samaritans here in the Coachella Valley. I think Bunker and I both had our doubts in the beginning that we had the temperaments this was going to be our destiny, but Bunker was incredible patience with me, and we made it.

Our first assignments were here in the Coachella Valley visiting challenged grade school children to help them read. They would read to Bunker but would not read to adults. We also visited abused families in shelters around the valley to give them comfort and joy. I was becoming amazed witnessing Bunker and his interaction with his newfound friends. He just knew what to do.

After several years here in the valley, we moved to the Phoenix area. Bunker and I had to be re-certified as a dog therapy team and get connected into the Arizona dog-therapy environment. We were so fortunate to learn of Phoenix Children's Hospital, a 500-bed pediatric acute hospital. This hospital has an entire department within Patient Services that manage dog therapy team visits with 55 dogs visiting the children (newborns to 18 years old) 8 hours a day, 7 days a week. The dog visits were prescribed by the physicians depending on the specific child's needs. Bunker and I began by working four days a week, 5 hours shifts a day, visiting 5 -10 patients a day and became one of two dogs in the program that were prescribed for "communication" by the physicians. I would like to share two of the many heartwarming and inspirational stories of our work at the hospital.

We were prescribed to visit Melody, a 6 year old girl that had come to the hospital badly abused by her family. She would not talk to the nurses, the doctors, Bunker, or me. We continued to visit Melody 3 days a week for over a month and finally she spoke. We were getting ready to leave our visit with Melody one day and she said "I love you Bunker!" and gave him a big hug for the first time. She knew she could trust Bunker. Over the course of several weeks forward she would only talk to and hug Bunker and then finally she gained trust in a few of the nurses and began talking.

We were prescribed to visit Brandon, a 13-year-old boy that had come to the hospital with severe brain damage after jumping off a freeway overpass. He had been in the hospital for about a month when we were first prescribed to visit Brandon. He was starting to show progress but would not speak to his family members. Over weeks of visits where Bunker would snuggle up beside Brandon and share these long stares Brandon gradually began working on his homework, but only when his parents or other adults were not in his room and Bunker was at his side.

Over the course of several weeks Brandon continued to progress with his learning but only when Bunker was beside him, so they increased Bunker's visits with Brandon to 4 days a week. He would stop if a family member or other adult came into the room. It was eventually determined Brandon's incident was caused by being so traumatized from the pressure to make perfect grades from his family. There was no pressure from Bunker. He again seemed to communicate with Brandon in such a way he understood as acceptance and trust.

Bunker receives Christmas cards from Melody, Brandon, and several other children from the hospital still today. They are all happy and doing extremely well.

Going from room to room, up and down the floors of the hospital to visit Bunker's patients so often we would hear an infant crying and Bunker would bee line to the crying baby's door. The nurses would invite us to come in and I would put Bunker up on the bed beside the baby and he would snuggle his nose under the baby and miraculously the baby would stop crying.

Several years later Bunker and I moved back to the desert and joined HOPE, a national dog therapy organization that focuses on disasters. We visited the sites destroyed by the fires up and down the West coast in 2017 adding comfort to devastated families and emergency support teams. These were heart-wrenching assignments as well. However, as in the hospital after each visit there were always sparks of inspiration felt.

After 12 wonderful years witnessing the miracles of Bunker, he continues to give unconditional love and communicate in ways I will never understand. Today we visit hospice patients as a dog therapy team with Destiny Hospice, and the smiles and small little pats on Bunker's head continue to bring such joy and inspiration to me every single day. He truly is a little miracle God has given to so many.

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**Destiny Hospice, Inc. – *Make a difference in someone's life today.***

Volunteer at Destiny Hospice! We have patients in their own homes and Assisted Living/Nursing facilities throughout the Coachella Valley. They would love to have a Volunteer to visit them once a week. We provide no medical or hands on care, just a kind heart. Reading to them, playing music, or just providing a listening ear! Just 1-2 hours a week makes a huge difference in someone's life at a very difficult time. Please call or email Karen Burke for more information. 760.851.5739 or [kburke@destinyhospicecare.com](mailto:kburke@destinyhospicecare.com)



Contributions by  
Elder Pauline Gregg

### The Iowa Wave Inspiration

Watch the University of Iowa University football game and at the end of the first quarter you'll see players, coaches, and fans (Hawkeyes and their opponents) united in one goal to cheer on the patients at the Stead Family Children's Hospital. All 69,250 people in attendance turn and wave in the direction of the hospital, where kids, their families, and staffers gather at the big windows overlooking Kinnick Stadium in Iowa City.



It kind of forces you to stop and think about things more important than football.

### Trash to Art Inspirations

Mariah Reading, an artist from Maine, saw so much garbage during hikes through national parks that it alarmed her. But it also gave her an idea. She would collect the trash and use it as her canvas. Since 2017, Reading has painted and photographed discarded cans, crumpled plastic water bottles, even old hubcaps, so that, when held just right, they blend seamlessly with nature. Instead of cluttering landscapes, the trash has become landscapes. She calls it "breathing new life into forgotten objects".



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Contributed by  
Tanya Caraballo & Gerald Alcantara

### Union In a Beautiful White Church

Finding Palm Springs Presbyterian Church was a God moment for us as it was always a dream to be married at a beautiful white church. Palm Springs is our favorite place on Earth, so it only made sense for us to get married there. Once we made the decision that Palm Springs was going to be our location, our next priority was finding the perfect church, and Palm Springs Presbyterian was it! The outside of the church immediately caught our eye as we were driving through town. It was the perfect white chapel, with a picturesque background of the San Jacinto Mountains.



When we inquired about having our wedding ceremony there, we met with Peggy, and she couldn't have been nicer. She was warm, welcoming, accommodating, communicative, kind, and supportive. She has been with us every step of the way to ensure we had a memorable and special experience. So thankful for all those who made it happen, including Carl, Alex and Noah.



Thank you, Palm Springs Presbyterian, for opening the doors to your place of worship. We felt God's presence and joy in our Union and so did our guests. May God continue to bless you all.



January		February		March	
6	Michael Lutke	1	Connie Burrill	9	Dick Erickson
10	Stan Griffeth	9	Frances Gotenstein	11	Kem Mackey
11	Norman Ross	9	Cal Custer	12	Sandy Rayner
17	Dirk Voerman	18	Pauline Gregg	15	Steve Chown
31	Phyllis Burrows	27	Cindy Anderson	16	Steve Dobay
				18	Sheron Doll
				19	Joe Mayer
				20	David Simpson
				21	Steve Cius
				23	Janet Snyder
				28	Steve Lutke
				28	Caryl Williamson

## Session Updates

Submitted by: *Elder Peggy Kueffer*  
Clerk of Session



As we begin the new year there are changes in our Board of Trustees, Session members and Committee Chairs. Following are the updated individuals and their roles for the 2023.

### Board of Trustees

President: Melvena Schaefer  
 Vice President: Cindy Stewart  
 Secretary: Peggy Kueffer  
 Treasurer: Carl Currin

### Session Members (Ruling Elders)

Rev. Jon Berquist, Moderator  
 Kay Chabot Peggy Kueffer, Clerk  
 Sarah Diaz Melvena Schaefer  
 Pauline Gregg Cindy Stewart

### Deacons

Peg Cius, Moderator  
 Morella Larsen Jackie Morgan  
 Jeff Morgan Melissa Yezek

### Committee Chairpersons

Membership/Outreach: Kay Chabot  
Nominating: TBD  
Worship: Peggy Kueffer  
Mission: Carole Rogers  
Christian Ed: TBD

Building & Grounds: Peggy Kueffer  
Administration/Personnel: TBD  
Congregational Life: Pauline Gregg  
Finance/Stewardship: Melvena Schaefer  
Pastor Nominating: Cindy Stewart

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### *Safe in His Arms, Now and Forever*

*With heavy hearts we would like to inform you our dear friend and PSPC member, Bruce McKenna, passed away December 18<sup>th</sup>. Our love and prayers are with Isabel and her family.*

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