

Palm Springs Church of Christ
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9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
November 26, 2023



Palm Springs Church of Christ

Palm Springs, CA

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Belonging Before Believing?

WHY NOT LET PEOPLE BELONG BEFORE THEY BELIEVE?—THREE REASONS

1. *It Confuses Christians*

Surely we should expect a range of spiritual maturity in the church, and Christians will sin. But what does it really mean to be a Christian in this context? Jesus talked about following him as a radical break with our former way of living. But when we begin to deliberately blur the line, we confuse Christians about what it means to be a follower of Jesus in the first place.

2. *It Confuses Non-Christians*

When non-Christians are never told that they are non-Christians, but are instead taught to think of themselves as “fellow travelers,” “seekers,” or “people at different stages of the same journey,” it’s easy for them to become confused about what it really means to be a Christian, and what it looks like to trust in the gospel. The desire to belong to a wonderful family of people can too easily lead someone to sign up for Jesus’ community, but never really sign on to Jesus’ command to repent and believe.

3. *It Fundamentally Redefines the Local Church*

Third, belonging before believing fundamentally redefines the local church. Everything changes when the church becomes the community of those who are merely on a journey together. For many, the outcome of the journey is unclear and uncertain. For others, the journey has come to a halt before the final destination is reached. For still others, the goal of salvation has been found. But the community itself is not a witness to the truth of Jesus Christ and his gospel. It can’t be if you can belong before you believe.

Instead, the community is merely a witness to itself, its warmth, openness, and inclusiveness. But what, in the end, is so unique and compelling about that? There are many warm and open communities, subcultures if you will. But they don’t testify to Jesus. Only the local church can do that. And even then, the church can do that only if you must believe in order to belong.

A BETTER IDEA


Belonging before believing is a bad idea. A better idea is what Jesus described in John 13: a community that profoundly believes the gospel so that its life is marked by a love for one another. Such a community, he said, will provoke those on the outside not only to recognize they are outside, but to desire to come in.

So go out of your way to create a community that welcomes the outsider. Give thought to the language you use. Be deliberate in your hospitality. And be strategic in your transparency. Like a bakery that pumps the delicious smell of its bread outside, publicly celebrate the stories of grace and transformation that are happening in your midst. And then, when you’ve done all else, make the gospel clear and invite people to respond to it in repentance and faith. Call them, not to walk an aisle, but to enter through the narrow door, and join with you in the riches of faith in the gospel.

If the church is to display the good things of the gospel, the barrier of belief must not be removed, for it is that shared belief on display that works most powerfully to invite people in.

-adapted from an article by Michael Lawrence, “How Belonging Before Believing Redefines the Church”, 9marks.org

**We have a commitment, empowered by the Holy Spirit,
To give glory to God
To be unified in reaching others
To be living witnesses for Christ**



*Welcome to the
Palm Springs Church of Christ*

The author of Psalm 4:7 said to God, “You have put gladness in my heart...”(NRSV). May God’s gladness be in your entire being on this Lord’s Day. We welcome you with joy!

“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people. (Ephesians 6:18)”

Pray for our Church family:
Please keep Byron in your prayers as he continues to suffer from chronic headaches. We also ask that you continue to pray for the improved health of: Mae Britton, Kerry Britton, Lynette Brink, Sue Collins, Wanda Goodenough, Brenda Jones, John Leonard, Roy McDonald, Jeff Mercer, Jerry Munn, Dail Paramore, and Francis Pati.

Pray for family & friends:
Pray for Marjorie Counts who is in hospice care and for Dustin Parker’s dad, Mike who continues to recover from a stroke. Pray for the improved health of: Jim & Mary Ann D’Arcy, Mary Fields, Joy Gabel Filippone, Keith & Lisa Britton, Kathy’s husband Kevin, Derek Fields, Dail’s friends Marie C. and Teddy K.

First responders: Please keep those who are serving their communities in your prayers: Alisha K. (EMT); Joanna Carter (Nurse), Luther Carter (Naval Officer), Jody Huggins and Jory Huggins (Patrol Officers); Dr. Janice Massey of N.C.

Military:
Jeff Mercer’s son-in-law Brandon Deusenberry, Glenn Fields, and Kathy’s family T. Burgess and T. Cairo.

Prayer Warriors Corner

Dear Father, we thank you for the hour of worship you provide for us. Please bless each member in this assembly. Thank You for Jesus whose death brought us the hope of eternal life. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Frank S. Paramore
Read: 1 John 2:24-29

News:
December potluck will be on the 3rd following worship service! Each household - please bring two dishes to contribute (main & side or main & dessert).

Ladies Bible Class will not be meeting this week. Class is due to resume in next week.

Wishing you a scam-free holiday season- We are approaching the time of year when gifts will be sent through the mail. Please be aware that the US Post Office and other couriers will not text or email you to confirm your mailing address. This is a scam. Scammers are illegally using the official logo of the US Post Office and other couriers such as Fedex, to falsely inform you that a parcel has arrived at their warehouse but they cannot forward it to you until you confirm your address. Do not click on the link they have provided, even though the website appears to be legitimate. Press delete and know that God is giving you more blessings than you can count.

The Community Food Bank is in need of: soups, vegetables, canned beans, 1 lb. packs of rice or beans and quart size storage bags. Other Non-perishable items such as: Ramen/Cup of Noodles, Rice-A-Roni, canned tomatoes, & canned fruit are needed. Thank you for your continued support, your donation is greatly appreciated.

Scripture reading: Matthew13:44-49

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found on of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. There they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous.

Sermon Title: “ You Belong”



Birthdays:

Susana Delgado:	11/1
Emilia Letalu:	11/18
Wanda Goodenough:	11/29
Jeff Mercer:	12/8
Jennifer Gutierrez:	12/15



Wedding Anniversaries:

E. Olea & S. Delgado:	11/18
Mario & Yanira Fuentes:	11/28
Jerry & Camelia Munn:	12/18

Ladies Bible Class: Thursdays @ 10:30 a.m.

Bible study: Sunday @ 9:30 a.m.

Worship service: Sunday @ 10:30 a.m.

WORSHIP ORDER

WELCOME / OPENING PRAYER
548: The Lily of the Valley (1-3)
324: Alas! and Did My Savior Bleed? (1,2 & 4)
COMMUNION & OFFERING: 1 Cor. 11:23-26
509: I will Sing the Wondrous Story (1-3)
Brief Intermission
1014: Jesus Loves Me (1-3)
SERMON
INVITATION
535: The Glory-Land Way (1-3)
ANNOUNCEMENTS & CLOSING PRAYER

Sermons on line: For the most recent locally recorded sermon, simply go to the Palm Springs Church of Christ webpage and click on the “sermons” category at the top of the page.

<http://www.crenshawchurchofchrist.com>
Tri Lakes Church of Christ in Monument, Colorado