



November 24, 2021

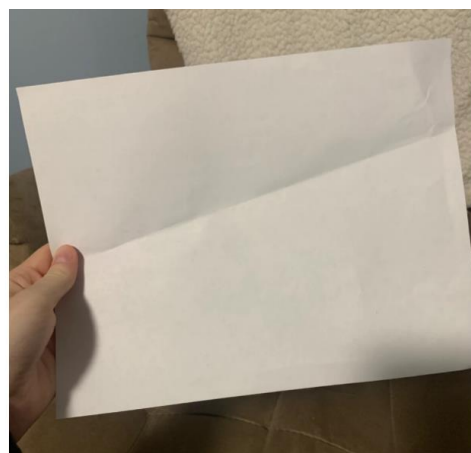
A Note from Pastor Jenny Smith

(Pastor Jenny is the creator of **Palms Up**, the series we're sharing for Advent this year. You'll find details by clicking or tapping the Palms Up image below and at the links after her signature.)

**Dear Friends,**

My son bounced up to me with a blank piece of paper in his hands. He grinned and put it in my lap. "Mom, I made you this!" I smiled as only a parent can when given something that makes no sense but is filled with such excitement. I lean in and give him a side hug while exclaiming gratitude for the blank and slightly wrinkled piece of paper.

He rolls his eyes, a clear sign he's quickly abandoning the innocence of childhood. "Moom, you don't get it. Look!" He pulls out a magic detective pen with a special light and shines it on the blank paper.



The bright purple light reveals the words, "I love you."

My heart explodes in an instant. This kid is more of a show-love human than a tell-love human. I say "I love you" to him multiple times a day, but he rarely says it out loud in return. His love takes the form of gifts and acts of kindness. And by holding a specific stuffed animal that he says, "Mom, when I hold this stuffed animal and show you, it means I love you." So you can imagine my delight when I get an actual piece of paper that says, "I love you!" I shrieked and gave him a big hug. He grinned. I pinned the blank piece of paper to my bulletin board in my office.

This act of love woke my heart up in another way, too.

This is life.

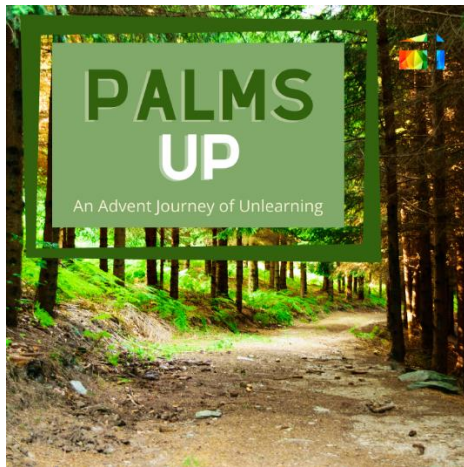
**We look around us for signs of life. For signs of love. For signs of hope and movement.**

We may often see blank pieces of paper.

But given an invitation to look at our world differently, we start to see love. Community. Forgiveness. Wisdom. The next step.

Healing.  
Peace.

Because it's all here. We just usually move too quickly to notice. We see the blank pages and keep moving.



**But what changes if we hold a special light that we shine into a situation in a new way?** We choose to slow down, take a breath, and really look at a person, a situation, an issue. We show up and pay attention. I happen to believe showing up and paying attention is the beginning of everything. A relationship that's struggling. A tense and difficult situation at work.

A systemic oppressive system.  
An uncertain future step.  
A deep truth in your body.  
A concerning diagnosis.  
A loss of a loved one.

When we see blank papers, with no clear direction or wisdom, may we show up and pay attention. May we look for the story under the story. The emotions and knowledge beyond the obvious. The love skipping behind what we can see, waiting for light to shine its way.

We might just find love from a surprising source.

**Palms up.**



Pastor Jenny Smith

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Show up. Pay attention. Cooperate with God. Release the outcome.  
#palmsuplife

Sign up for Jenny's email newsletter - "Your Palms Up Life" -

at [www.palmsup.co/your-palms-up-life](http://www.palmsup.co/your-palms-up-life).

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*This letter comes from a recent blog post of Jenny's located  
at <https://www.jennysmithwrites.com/post/love-blank-papers-finding-the-next-step>.*



**God Loves You  No Matter What**

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