

WHEN

ALL

SEEMS

LOST



Sunday, August 9, 2020

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## Contents

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## Limitless Love | Courageous Action | Spirited Inquiry

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### Purpose Statement

Parkway United Church of Christ strives to be an inclusive community embracing: spiritual nourishment, open—minded inquiry, courageous action, and interfaith partnerships to fulfill God’s calling to create a just world for all.

### Congregational Statement

Parkway United Church of Christ, with God’s grace, seeks to be a congregation that includes all persons, regardless of race, ethnic, or socio—economic background while respecting differences of gender, marital status, age, sexual orientation, and mental and physical ability. We aspire to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God. We invite all to share in the life and leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities and blessings of participation in our open and affirming congregation.

## PARKWAY UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST

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John Nourse, *Pastor Emeritus*

# Welcome

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**Thank you for joining us this morning.** Please let us know you are here by commenting in the chat.

**Welcome Children.** We invite children to full participation in worship.

**Bell Rung During Lord's Prayer.** A tradition begun when farmers working in surrounding fields would stop their work and join in prayer.

**Subscribe to our email lists:** Text your email address to 22828 or sign up at [www.parkwayucc.org](http://www.parkwayucc.org)

**Communications Requests:** Please use the form at [www.parkwayucc.org/communications](http://www.parkwayucc.org/communications) for all announcements for the bulletin/eNews/website/social media/etc. Bulletin and eNews communications request deadline is noon Tuesday. Bulletin announcements will generally be run for three weeks prior to the event. However, all announcements will be posted via our various publications as fits in our communications strategy and as resources permit.

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## Anniversaries

- 8/10 MCKENZIE, Tom & Kris (35)
- 8/11 MOELLERING, Sue & Charles (53)
- 8/13 SCHATZ, Dave & Jill (32)
- 8/15 STAPPENBECK, Julie & Thad (22)

## Birthdays

- |                         |                    |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 8/9 CAMERON, Kevin      | 8/13 WADDELL, Judy |
| 8/10 WEAS, Davis        | 8/13 WOLFF, Tate   |
| 8/11 LYONS, Blake       | 8/13 YESS, Gregory |
| 8/12 ENGEL, Donna       | 8/14 STOHR, Sue    |
| 8/12 ROESLER, Alexander | 8/15 DWYER, Dottie |
| 8/13 BURKHARDT, Dan     | 8/15 WATSON, Mary  |
| 8/13 SONTAG, David      |                    |

# 10<sup>th</sup> Sunday *after* Pentecost

August 9, 2020 | 10:00am

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## Meditation

*You can't cross the sea merely by standing and staring at the water.*  
~Rabindranath Tagore

*A river cuts through rock not because of its power but because of its persistence.* ~Jim Watkins

*I have seen the sea when it is storm and wild; when it is quiet and serene; when it is dark and moody. And in all these moods, I see myself.*

~Martin Buxbaum

*The woman said to Jesus, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will never be thirsty and will never need to come here to draw water!"* ~John 4:15

*To say, my fate is not tied to your fate, is like saying your end of the boat is sinking.* ~Hugh Downs

*I will come to you in the silence. I will lift you from all your fear. You will hear my voice, I claim you as My choice. Be still, and know I am near.*

~Peter De Angelis and Robert P. Marcucci

*But when she could hide him no longer, she got him a wicker basket and covered it over with tar and pitch. Then she put the child into it and set it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile.* ~Exodus 2:3

*If grace is an ocean, we're all sinking.* ~John Mark McMillan

*The law of floatation was not discovered by contemplating the sinking of things, but by contemplating the floating of things which floated naturally, and then intelligently asking why they did so.* ~Thomas Troward

*O Captain! My Captain! our fearful trip is done; The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won; The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting.* ~Walt Whitman

*And I'll stand on the ocean until I start sinking.* ~Bob Dylan

*Feelings are much like waves, we can't stop them from coming but we can choose which one to surf.* ~Jonatan Mårtensson

*Out of the huts of history's shame—I rise. Up from a past that's rooted in pain—I rise. I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide. Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.* ~Maya Angelou

## Passing the Peace of Christ

“May the peace of Christ be with you.”

(We are intentional about bringing more peace into the world.)

## Prelude *I Sing the Mighty Power of God*—arr. for piano (unattributed)

Based on original tune from *Gesangbuch der Herzoglich Wirtembergischen Katholischen Hofkapelle*, 1784

# Lighting of the Candles & Ringing of the Bell

## Song *Come, Now is the Time to Worship*



Come, now is the time to wor - ship. \_



Come, now is the time to give \_ your heart. \_



Come, just as you are to wor - ship. \_

*Last time to Coda* ⊕



Come, just as you are be - fore \_ your God, \_



come. One day ev - ery tongue will con - fess \_



\_ you are God. One day ev - ery knee will bow. \_



Still the great - est treas - ure re - mains \_ for those who glad -



ly choose you now. \_

⊕ CODA



Come.

Come.

Come.

## Call to Worship

One:	Faith is patience in the night - waiting for the morning light - never giving up the fight.
Many:	<b>Spirit God, give me faith.</b>
One:	Faith is laughter in our pain - joy in pleasures that remain - trust in one we can't explain.
Many:	<b>Spirit God, give us faith.</b>
One:	Faith is steadfast will to live - standing firm and positive - being ready still to give.
Many:	<b>Spirit God, give me faith.</b>
One:	Faith is courage under stress - confidence in hopelessness - greatest gift we can possess.
All:	<b>Spirit God, give us faith.</b>

## Scripture Psalm 121 | My Help



**Opening Prayer** *Affirmation of Community, First Cong UCC, Memphis*  
**We will be together. We will stand as brothers and sisters given life by one God. We will be together. We will watch out for one another. We will listen to what needs to be said in a spirit of compassion. We will respect the power of silence. We will wait for the slowest. We will sooner or later catch up with the fastest. We will dry the tears of those who are weeping - and know that they will dry ours when the time comes. We will let ourselves begin to feel at least a little of the pain of those we have considered our enemies. We will entrust our stories to each other. We will not be skeptical that peace can come. We will not forget the joy of life. We will not forget to be grateful. We will do our best to stir in each other hope, courage and faith. Amen.**



**Children's Time** Children and Youth are invited to separate Zoom classrooms immediately following this Children's Time.

## **Blessing the Children** *I'm So Glad Jesus Lifted Me*

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "I'm So Glad Jesus Lifted Me". It consists of four staves of music in 4/4 time, with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes, with brackets indicating phrasing. The lyrics are: "I'm so glad, When I was in trou-ble, Je - sus lift - ed me, I'm so glad, When I was in trou-ble, Je - sus lift - ed me, I'm so glad, When I was in trou-ble, Je - sus lift - ed me, sing - ing glo - ry, hal - le - lu - jah, Je - sus lift - ed me."

I'm so glad,  
When I was in trou-ble, } Je - sus lift - ed me,

I'm so glad,  
When I was in trou-ble, } Je - sus lift - ed me,

I'm so glad,  
When I was in trou-ble, } Je - sus lift - ed me, sing - ing

glo - ry, hal - le - lu - jah, Je - sus lift - ed me.

## **Scripture** Matthew 14:22-33 (CEB – Common English Bible)

Joe Rowley, former PUCG Pastor

Right then, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead to the other side of the lake while he dismissed the crowds. When he sent them away, he went up onto a mountain by himself to pray. Evening came and he was alone. Meanwhile, the boat, fighting a strong headwind, was being battered by the waves and was already far away from land.

Very early in the morning he came to his disciples, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified and said, "It's a ghost!" They were so frightened they screamed. Just then Jesus spoke to them, "Be encouraged! It's me. Don't be afraid." Peter replied, "Lord, if it's you, order me to come to you on the water." And Jesus said, "Come." Then Peter got out of the boat and was walking on the water toward Jesus. But when Peter saw the strong wind, he became frightened. As he began to sink, he shouted, "Lord, rescue me!" Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him, saying, "You man of weak faith! Why did you begin to have doubts?" When they got into the boat, the wind settled down. Then those in the boat worshipped Jesus and said, "You must be God's Son!"

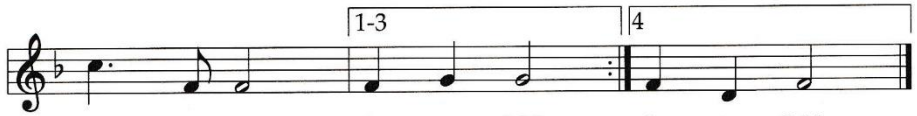
## Response *Faith is Patience in the Night*



1. Faith is pa - tience in the night, wait - ing for the
2. Faith is laugh - ter in our pain, joy in plea - sures
3. Faith is stead - fast will to live, stand - ing firm and
4. Faith is cour - age un - der stress, con - fi - dence in



- morn - ing light, nev - er giv - ing up the fight.  
that re - main, trust in one we can't ex - plain.  
pos - i - tive, be - ing read - y still to give.  
hope - less - ness, great - est gift we can pos - sess.



- Spir - it God give us faith. give us faith.

## Moment of Silent Reflection

### Sermon *Sinking and Rising*

### Call to Prayer *You Are Mine*



1. — I will come to you in the si - lence, —
2. — I am hope for all who are hope-less, —
3. — I am strength for all the de - spair-ing, —
4. I am the Word that leads all to free - dom, I



- I will lift you from — all your fear. —  
I am eyes for all who long to see. In the  
heal - ing for the ones who dwell in shame. —  
am the peace the world can - not give. —





You will hear my voice, I claim you as my choice, be  
 shad-ows of the night, I will be your light,  
 All the blind will see, the lame will all run free, and  
 I will call your name, em - brac - ing all your pain, stand



still and know I am here. \_\_\_\_\_  
 come and rest in  
 all will know my  
 up, now walk, and



me. \_\_\_\_\_  
 name. \_\_\_\_\_ Do not be a - fraid, I am  
 live! \_\_\_\_\_



with you. I have called you each by name.



Come and fol-low me, I will bring you home; I



love you and you are mine. \_\_\_\_\_

## Pastoral Prayer & Prayers of the People

### Lord's Prayer

**Our [Creator/Mother/Father/Holy One] who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

[A variety of names for God are welcome here – including in the Lord's Prayer.]

**Song** *I Need You to Survive*—Hezekiah Walker

**I need you, you need me. We're all a part of God's body.  
Stand with me, agree with me. We're all a part of God's body.**

**It is God's will, that every need be supplied.  
You are important to me, I need you to survive.  
You are important to me, I need you to survive.**

**I pray for you. You pray for me.  
I love you. I need you to survive.  
I won't harm you with words from my mouth.  
I love you. I need you to survive.**

**It is God's will, that every need be supplied.  
You are important to me. I need you to survive.**

**Mission Moment** OCWM – Our Church's Wider Mission

Ginny Brown Daniel, Missouri Mid-South Conference Minister

**Offering Our Gifts to God**

**Offertory** *Happy Are They Who Trust in the Lord*—Robert J. Powell

**Prayer of Dedication** Mustard Seed Blog

**We make our offerings, small and large, with the hope and confidence that all we do, all we offer, all we say, all we think, and all we hope will take root in this world and be the source of new expressions of God's love, of God's justice, of God's character, of God's mission, and of God's kingdom. May God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven through us, alongside us, despite us, and for us. Amen.**

**Song of Parting** *We Walk by Faith* v1-3



1., 5. We walk by faith, and not by sight: No  
2. We may not touch his hands and side, nor  
3. Help then, O Lord, our un - be - lief, and  
4. That when our life of faith is done in



gra - cious words we hear \_\_\_\_\_ of him who spoke as  
fol - low where he trod; \_\_\_\_\_ yet in his prom - ise  
may our faith a - bound; \_\_\_\_\_ to call on you when  
realms of clear - er light \_\_\_\_\_ we may be - hold you



none e'er spoke, but we be - lieve him near. \_\_\_\_  
 we re - joice, and cry, "My Lord and God!" \_\_\_\_  
 you are near, and seek where you are found: \_\_\_\_  
 as you are in full and end - less sight. \_\_\_\_

## Benediction

### God's Light Goes Forth

**Music for Going Forth** *O Glorious Day*—James Mansfield

# Announcements

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## TODAY: Parkway Speaker Series

*Confessions of a Book Disciple*—Harold Cobb

Sunday, August 9 | 11:15am | via ZOOM

Harold has a passion for books, which, in turn, gives him strong credentials to know what's a good read and what's not. Expect his Top Ten List.

**ZOOM link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84898581439?pwd=V1JhZXNod1JStjVJcm1QYWWhOck9JQT09>

**Meeting ID:** 848 9858 1439 | **Password:** 256973 | **Phone:** (312) 626-6799

## Tuesday Evening Dialogue August 11

2nd & 4th Tuesdays | 7:00pm | via ZOOM

### *If Beale Street Could Talk* by James Baldwin

Be a part of the discussion of this honest and stunning novel that inspired the award-winning major motion picture of the same name, James Baldwin has given America a moving story of love in the face of injustice.

**ZOOM link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88245410276?pwd=YW1NSlc0YW5WNMSGo3bWZrUHlrVjE5VjZlR0p1aDZkdz09>

**Meeting ID:** 882 4541 0276 | **Passcode:** 221351 | **Phone:** (312) 626-6799

## Helping Our Neighbors

Now through August 16

Back-to-school clothing items needed. Isaiah 58 is requesting socks, underwear, and gift cards for shoes, for all ages, L-12. Isaiah 58 serves our neighbors in the Choteau, Jefferson, Cherokee, and S. Kingshighway boundaries. These items are especially needed during these difficult times of the pandemic and unemployment. Drop off donations at church in the SCHOOL BUS just inside the main doors at your convenience and/or add to your food pantry donations in August.

Contact Evelyn Buretta: [burettaevelyn@gmail.com](mailto:burettaevelyn@gmail.com)

## **Give-A-Meal Anytime this Summer!**

Make a financial contribution and/or share non-perishable food items with Isaiah 58 or Circle of Concern. They are doing critically important work these days. Monetary support can be sent to them directly. Food can be dropped there (note their restricted hours) or here on the table just inside the main doors. <https://i58ministries.org/> **and** <http://www.circleofconcern.org/>

## **St Louis Metro Area Crop Walk 2020** Sunday, October 25

Please visit [www.crophungerwalk.org/saintlouismo](http://www.crophungerwalk.org/saintlouismo) for all details of this virtual walk. When you go to the website, enter the name of our walk, Parkway UCC and it will take you to our donation page. The need for food is HUGE this year, both locally and internationally, so we are accepting donations now so the monies can be distributed immediately. Thanks for all you do, Parkway. Your Crop Walk Team, Sue Moellering, Gerry and Mike Rogers, and Pamela Manning.

**LIFE classes from Eden Seminary** will be happening via Zoom this fall. We are going to go back to the Friday evening- shorter Saturday format as the faculty feels that this will help reduce “Zoom Fatigue” for the Certificate courses. The Psalm Elective will be three Wed. nights.

So the timing will be Friday 7:00-9:00

Sat. 9-11:30/ 12:30-2:00.

Full course descriptions from the Eden faculty and registration information will be available soon.

Certificate Courses:

Sept. 25 & 26 Missional Leadership Numerous with Rev. Steve Lawler

Oct. 23 & 24 Preaching, Rev. Dr. Christopher Grundy

Nov. 13 & 14 Pastoral Care, Rev. Dr. Kristen Leslie

PSALM elective: Sept. 9, 16, 23 7:00-9:00 p.m. Rev. Dr. Clint McCann.

**Habitat for Humanity St. Louis** Due to the pandemic, there are currently no construction volunteer opportunities available. However, our local Habitat staff continues to finish the 5 homes in the La Saison neighborhood, and will then move on to 5 new homes in the Gate neighborhood.

The need for financing still exists. Through the generosity of two anonymous donors, your gift to Habitat for Humanity Saint Louis can go twice as far! From now through August 31st, gifts made by donors like you will be matched dollar for dollar, up to \$40,000 - that's a total of \$80,000 we can potentially raise with your help!

Remember: in order for your gift to count toward the match, you must give directly to our local office at 3830 South Grand Blvd or make your gift online at [www.habitatSTL.org](http://www.habitatSTL.org). Thank you for helping us make the most of this fundraising opportunity, which translates to affordable housing for families in need, right here in St. Louis.

More info? Tom McKenzie: [mckenzie1947@att.net](mailto:mckenzie1947@att.net) | (314) 567-0429

## Alzheimer's News

This past week was the virtual Alzheimer's Association International Conference (AAIC). Monday research was presented showing receipt of Flu and Pneumonia vaccinations are associated with reduced risk of Alzheimer's Disease. Included in Tuesday's research was news that a blood test for Alzheimer's markers of abnormal Tau protein may show changes in the brain 20 years prior to dementia symptoms and could be available in doctor's offices in the not too distant future. Wednesday discussions turned to the need for more transparency in care homes due to COVID -19 and what impact the virus may have on the brain. Thursday research was presented showing that risk factors such as high blood pressure and diabetes apparent as early as our teens and 20's may be risk factors for Alzheimer's Disease later in life. For more information the Alzheimer's Helpline is accessible 24/7 via 800-272-3900 and staffed by master's level clinicians to assist with crisis situations, decision making, and disease information. You can find virtual dementia caregiver resources online at [alz.org/covid19help](http://alz.org/covid19help). Tools and support are also available in Spanish.

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## Earth Prayer

 by Mark Nepo

O Endless Creator, Force of Life, Seat of the Unconscious,  
Dharma, Atman, Ra, Qalb, Dear Center of our Love,  
Christlight, Yaweh, Allah, Mawu, Mother of the Universe...

Let us, when swimming with the stream, become the stream.  
Let us, when moving with the music, become the music.  
Let us, when rocking the wounded, become the suffering.

Let us live deep enough till there is only one direction,  
and slow enough till there is only the beginning of time,  
and loud enough in our hearts till there is no need to speak.

Let us live for the grace beneath all we want,  
let us see it in everything and everyone,  
till we admit to the mystery that when I look deep enough into you,  
I find me, and when you dare to hear my fear  
in the recess of your heart, you recognize it  
as your secret which you thought no one else knew.

O let us embrace  
that unexpected moment of unity as the atom of God.  
Let us have the courage to hold each other when we break  
and worship what unfolds...

O nameless spirit that is not done with us,  
let us love without a net beyond the fear of death  
until the speck of peace we guard so well becomes the world.

# PUCC Prayer List

as of August 5, 2020

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## Celebrations

**Marion Pleis** - birth of her ninth great grandchild, Iris Quinn Canaday.  
**All the acts of kindness that are happening near and far!**  
**The momentum toward justice and equity.**

## Concerns

**Naomi and Joe Runtz** - recuperating from her knee replacement.  
**Lisa Davidson & Family** - grieving/giving thanks for her mother.  
**Karen Boyd & Family** - celebrating the life of her brother Alvah.  
**Marv Herpel** - strengthening after a fall - Surrey Place... 314-413-0985;  
Canyon Creek #21; 14701 Olive Blvd, Chesterfield, MO 63017.  
**Evelyn Buretta** & family as they grieve/give thanks for bro-in-law Ed.  
**Sue Stolze** - in need of healing after surgery for perforated ulcer.  
**Susan Sieber Carroll** - surgery on 8/10 due to Crohn's Disease.  
**Healthcare workers, homeless** and many others at risk right now.  
**Social Distancing...** if anyone needs groceries, medicine and/or other support, please reach out to kevin@parkwayucc.org; 314-330-0629  
**People who are struggling with their mental health.**  
**People who aren't feeling safe at home** but are remaining there.  
**Individuals in all levels of leadership** as they make decisions today.  
**Healing of relationships between the public and the police.**  
**Decision-making regarding school for his coming year.**  
**People and places dealing with powerful storms this week.**  
**People of Beirut, Lebanon** as they recover from violence and more.

## Continuing

**Pat and Bill Klein** - settling in at Anthology in Wildwood. \*\*  
**David Haack** - 'acute care'; no longer COVID-19 positive (Bill's dad).  
**Cherie Stolze** - ongoing health issues; navigating medications/fatigue.  
**Randal Barnes** - receiving hospice care (Steve's brother).  
**Lori Connors** - for strength, stamina through some health challenges.  
**Ruth Peace & Pinky Wilcoxon** - PUCC sisters with health challenges.  
**Bill Darland** - ongoing health issues.  
**Nelson Spencer** - chemotherapy treatments (Svenson).  
**Tina** - undergoing treatment for cancer (Scharf).  
**Anthony** - multiple challenges as he lives his post-incarceration life.  
**Gary** - risky behaviors; seeking balance and stability (McKenzie).  
**Grateful Tran** - in prison; struggles w/schizophrenia (Evelyn Buretta)  
**Bob** - continues to struggle with Parkinson's (McKenzie).  
**Christopher, Gail & Bill Haack** - chronic health challenges.  
**The extended Eggebrecht Family** - healing and wholeness.

## Pregnancy

**Laura & Phil Waite...** pending big brothers Henry, Oscar and Felix.



## Home/Care Facility/Rehab Center

**Millicent Guerri** - living with cancer... 14300 Conway Meadows Ct E, Chesterfield, MO 63017 [birthdate: December 5]

**Marv Herpel** - *Brookdale West County*; 785 Henry Ave, #217; Ballwin, MO 63021; 636-227-5838 [birthdate: March 3]

**\*\*Pat Klein** - *Anthology Senior Living of Wildwood*; 251 Plaza Dr, #325; Wildwood, MO 63040 [birthdate: September 21]

**\*\*Bill Klein** - *Anthology Senior Living of Wildwood*; 251 Plaza Dr, #104; Wildwood, MO 63040 [birthdate: March 8]

**Pearl Sellenriek** - *Friendship Village Care Center*; #725-2 15201 Olive Blvd, Chesterfield, MO 63017 [birthdate: March 31]

**Dwight Smith** - *Manor Grove*; 711 S Kirkwood Rd; Kirkwood, MO 63122; [birthdate: September 6]

**Sue Houser** - *Bethany Ctr for Rehab & Healing*; 421 Ocala Dr - #209B; Nashville, TN 37211; 615-577-2049. [birthdate: July 8]

## Other

**Dan Connors** - completed writing a novel... taking next steps.

**President Trump, Congress**, all local, national, world leaders.

**The “me too” Movement** - shining a light on sexual abuse.

**All people who live with mental illness.**

**PUCC Family** (and others) struggling with healthcare costs and limits.

**Our Missouri Mid-South Conference and St Louis Assn UCC**

**Variety of Parkway members/friends** - employment issues.

**Victims of Natural and Created Disasters** around the world.

**Peace and Justice** near and far.

**US Military** around the globe.

## St Louis Assn UCC Covenant Partner

Week ending August 9 - St John UCC, Manchester; stjohmanchester.org

Week ending August 16 - St. Johns Evangelical UCC, Mehlville; stjucc.org

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## Prayer

 by Sharon Cumberland

Ignore, O Mystery,  
this thing You made.

It trembles me to think on You,  
genderless, less than fluttering tissue,  
not like me or any thing I know.

I fear to conjure You with prayer,  
lest your mighty zero zero in on me -  
What might You do?

Extract a whirlwind from my mind?  
Impregnate my old age?

Burden me with prophecy  
then strike me blind?  
Hold me, O Mystery,  
in your sidelong view.  
Insofar as You are good,  
be good to me too; or leave me  
with the pebbles of consolation:  
other people, things to do.

Ignore, O Mystery, this thing  
You made.

It trembles me to ponder You.

## When All Seems Lost

Human trafficking is a real, terrible and often invisible component of our daily life. The United Church of Christ is working to shine light on this hidden human rights crisis.

According to the UCC's justice webpage, [https://www.ucc.org/justice\\_womens-issues\\_human-trafficking](https://www.ucc.org/justice_womens-issues_human-trafficking).<sup>\*</sup> "As of 2016, an estimated 24.9 million people were in modern slavery, not including the 15.4 million that were forced into marriage. Traffickers prey on those from vulnerable communities and force them into labor, and/or exploit them into commercial sexual enterprises. The influx of immigrants crossing the border into America are most susceptible to modern slavery, as traffickers use their vulnerability as immigrants as tools to manipulate and coerce.

Trafficking in persons is a crime against humanity and ultimately a sin. Human trafficking denies the values of human life, exposes victims to serious health risks, endangers the mental well-being of victims and impedes the ability of victims to reach their full God-given potential. As Christians, we believe that every human being is created in the image and likeness of the divine Creator, of God. The prophets cried out against the exploitation of the poor and of laborers who are not treated fairly and compensated justly (Job 24:1-12, for example).

The United Church of Christ has consistently upheld the rights and dignity of workers and of women and children, believing that God calls us into community with each other as sisters and brothers, not as exploiters and exploited. The violence done to the physical, psychological and spiritual wellbeing of children and women who are forced into prostitution, the pornography industry, sex tourism and other forms of exploitation are violations of the call of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to love our neighbors as ourselves. The kin-dom of God among us requires us to provide protection for those most vulnerable and to seek conditions which support wholeness and health for everyone."

In today's reading from Genesis, Joseph is sold into slavery by his brothers and trafficked across national borders. For him, this was the first step on the road to a new life, but he needed a lot of helping hands to get him there. May we, as a denomination, as local congregations, and as individuals be that helping hand for those who need it.

<sup>\*</sup>Accessed January 2020. [https://www.ucc.org/justice\\_womens-issues\\_human-trafficking](https://www.ucc.org/justice_womens-issues_human-trafficking)

