



Star of Wonder



Sunday, January 3, 2021

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Limitless Love | Courageous Action | Spirited Inquiry

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 to Parkway

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

Communications Requests: Please use the form at www.parkwayucc.org/communications for all announcements for the bulletin/eNews/website/social media/etc. Bulletin and eNews communications request deadline is noon Monday. 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.

Pledge Campaign for our Mission & Ministry 2021

We are still accepting pledges: <https://parkwayucc.org/giving/pledge/>

Thank you for your continuing support of Parkway United Church of Christ.

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Birthdays

1/3 BURKHARDT, Connie

1/6 TILLY, Ethan

1/3 RISTAU, Nicole

1/7 MCDOUGALL, Marilyn

1/4 SIMONSON, Ryan

1/8 HENKE, Pema

1/6 HILGEMAN, Bill

Epiphany

Sunday, January 3, 2021 | 10:00am | Facebook Live

Meditation *Sometime after the birth of Jesus, a group of astrologers were overjoyed to discover that the star they had been following stopped over a house in Bethlehem. They had found what they were looking for—the child who had been born “king of the Jews.” King Herod, who believed he was the king of the Jewish people, was horrified by the threat of another contender for the throne. He had good reason to be worried; after all, Jesus was the liberator who had come to make all people free from tyranny and oppression. The magi realized that Herod was dangerous, and after they had worshipped the tiny king and offered their gifts, they returned home along a different road. ~Sarah Travis*

Passing the Light of Christ

Prelude *We Three Kings*—arr. Fred Bock,
Based on the carol by John Henry Hopkins, Jr., 1857

Lighting of the Candles & Ringing of the Bell

Gathering Song *Angels from the Realms of Glory*

**Sages, leave your contemplations,
Brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great Desire of nations,
Ye have seen his natal star:
Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King.**

Scripture Matthew 2:1-12 (MSG – The Message)

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem village, Judah territory - this was during Herod's kingship - a band of scholars arrived in Jerusalem from the East.

They asked around, “Where can we find and pay homage to the newborn King of the Jews? We observed a star in the eastern sky that signaled his birth. We're on pilgrimage to worship him.”

When word of their inquiry got to Herod, he was terrified - and not Herod alone, but most of Jerusalem as well.

Herod lost no time. He gathered all the high priests and religion scholars in the city together and asked, “Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?”

They told him, “Bethlehem, Judah territory. The prophet Micah wrote it plainly:

*It's you, Bethlehem, in Judah's land, no longer bringing up the rear.
From you will come the leader who will shepherd-rule my people, my Israel.”*

Herod then arranged a secret meeting with the scholars from the East. Pretending to be as devout as they were, he got them to tell him exactly when the birth-announcement star appeared. Then he told them the prophecy about Bethlehem, and said, “Go find this child. Leave no stone unturned. As soon as you find him, send word and I’ll join you at once in your worship.”

Instructed by the king, they set off. Then the star appeared again, the same star they had seen in the eastern skies.

It led them on until it hovered over the place of the child. They could hardly contain themselves: They were in the right place! They had arrived at the right time!

They entered the house and saw the child in the arms of Mary, his mother. Overcome, they kneeled and worshiped him. Then they opened their luggage and presented gifts: gold, frankincense, myrrh.

In a dream, they were warned not to report back to Herod. So they worked out another route, left the territory without being seen, and returned to their own country.

Call to Worship Isaiah 60:1-6

One:	Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and glory will appear over you.
Many:	Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses’ arms.
One:	Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come.
Many:	They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.
All:	Let us worship our God together—Creator, Christ and Spirit.

Song *We Three Kings*



All: 1. We three kings of O - ri - ent are,
 Opt. solo: 2. Born a King on Beth - le - hem's plain,
 Opt. solo: 3. Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I:
 Opt. solo: 4. Myrrh is mine; its bit - ter per - fume
 All: 5. Glo - rious now be - hold Him a - rise,

Bear - ing gifts we tra - verse a - far, Field and foun - tain,
 Gold I bring to crown Him a - gain, King for ev - er,
 In - cense owns a De - i - ty nigh; Prayer and prais - ing
 Breathes a life of gath - er - ing gloom; Sor - rowing, sigh - ing,
 King and God and Sac - ri - fice; Al - le - lu - ia,

moor and moun - tain, Fol - low - ing yon - der star.
 ceas - ing nev - er O - ver us all to reign.
 we are rais - ing, Wor - ship - ing God Most High.
 bleed - ing, dy - ing, Sealed in the stone - cold tomb.
 Al - le - lu - ia Sounds through the earth and skies.

Refrain

O star of won - der, star of night,

Star with roy - al beau - ty bright; West - ward lead - ing,

still pro - ceed - ing, Guide us to thy per - fect light!

Opening Prayer

God of light and love, in this very moment the star still shines. Gather us and let the star call us to new ways of self-awareness, healing and hope, restoration and renewal, as we discover again Christ's call to follow in his ways. Amen.

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

Blessing the Children *This Little Light of Mine*

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine (3x)
 Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

Offering Our Gifts to God

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen—arr. Fred Bock

Response *Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow* (Avery & Marsh)

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Praise God, the Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Prayer of Dedication

Holy One, we have our own gifts to offer. We have been carrying them around with us, not always sure what they are or what to do with them. Help us to take stock of these gifts, abilities, possibilities. We want and need to share them with you, loved ones and strangers. We are all connected and belong to one another. Amen.

Scripture Matthew 2:1-12 (NRSV – New Revised Standard Version)

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’” Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared.

Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.”

When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Moment of Silent Reflection

Sermon

Invitation to the Communion Table We invite all who love God, follow Jesus and want to grow in the Spirit to come to this open table.

Call to Prayer *Here I Am, Lord*

**I, who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright
Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?**

**Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night
I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart**

Pastoral Prayer & Prayers of the People

Lord's Prayer Sung to the tune by Nate Stout

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.]

Breaking Bread & Pouring Wine

Communion Song *Christ Be Our Light*

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.

Longing for truth we turn to you.

Make us your own, your holy people, light for the world to see.

Refrain: **Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts,
shine through the darkness.**

Christ, be our light! Shine in your church, gathered today.

Longing for peace, our world is troubled

Longing for hope, many despair.

Your word alone has power to save us

Make us your living voice. (refrain)

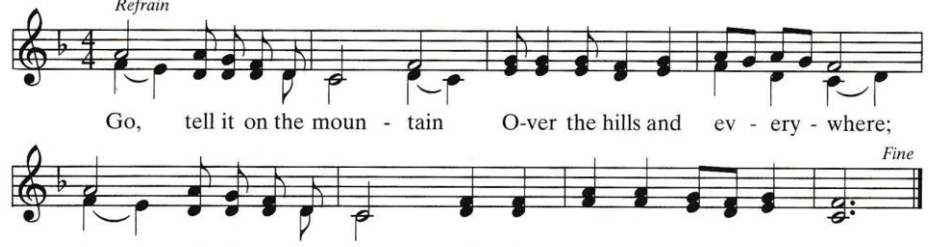
Prayer of Thanksgiving

Holy One, we are light, gold, frankincense, myrrh. We are Herod. We are wise ones. We are rising, sent, overwhelmed. We are stopping, entering, paying homage. And now we depart to return to where we have come from—but by a different road. Grateful for this sacred simple meal, we go. We are ready to offer our gifts to make a difference—and to be transformed in the sharing. Amen.

Blessing

Hymn *Go, Tell it on the Mountain*

Refrain



Go, tell it on the moun - tain O-ver the hills and ev - ery - where;

Go, tell it on the moun - tain That Je - sus Christ is born!

Fine



1. While shep-herds kept their watch-ing O'er si - lent flocks by night,
2. The shep-herds feared and trem-bled When lo! a - bove the earth,
3. Down in a low - ly man-ger The hum-ble Christ was born,



Be - hold through-out the heav-ens There shone a ho - ly light.
Rang out the an-gel cho - rus That hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
And God sent us sal - va - tion That bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

God's Light Goes Forth

Music for Going Forth *Joy to the World*—attr. G F Handel

Announcements

Join Us for Tuesday Afternoon Dialogue (TAD) Jan 5

1st & 3rd Tuesdays beginning 11/17 | 2:00-3:00pm | via ZOOM

Tuesday afternoon Dialogue, a Zoom book discussion group and TED sibling. Everyone is welcome. We meet the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month. We are discussing *Almost Everything: Notes on Hope* by Anne Lamott—an exploration of hope and the place it holds in our lives. Join us! Contact Gerry Rogers: gcr123055@gmail.com or Jackie Eiffert: jeiffert2@gmail.com

Video:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83670617428?pwd=bUxPZEdDMlU4ay9oNndTWw4yZUYwUT09>

Join by phone: 312 626 6799 | **Meeting ID:** 836 7061 7428 | **Passcode:** 480007

TED Book Group: This I Believe (starts January 12)

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

Please join us for some fun and inspiring discussion of the book *This I Believe* edited by Jay Allison and Dan Gediman. Volume 1.

Based on the NPR series of the same name, it features 80 short essays. Some were written by famous people and other essays were written by lesser known folks. These essays may bring us moments to reflect and rethink how we have arrived at our own personal beliefs and also the extent to which we share them with others. *For our first session of this book discussion, please read up through Temple Grandin's essay which ends on page 90.*

Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89263841824?pwd=eIVDSVVUMHZZeStLZIBLeEzjWVVBVZz09>

Meeting ID: 892 6384 1824 | **Passcode:** Book Club

Phone: (312) 626 6799 US | **Passcode:** 410992587

Prayer List

as of December 30, 2020

Celebrations

All the acts of kindness that are happening near and far!

The momentum toward justice and equity.

Brian Sableman & Daphane Tan - PUCC wedding in February; traditional Chinese wedding in 2022 with Daphane's family in Malaysia.

Concerns

Jim Winkelmann - in rehab hospital, healing after a stroke. He would welcome encouragement! 314-610-3348... SSM Health Rehabilitation Hospital, 12380 DePaul Dr; Room #219; Bridgeton, MO 63044.

Greg Schmelig & Doug Reynolds - Covid-19 with minor symptoms.

Barb Kuhlmann family - as cousin Steve died of Covid-19 last wknd.

Jim - fighting COVID for 2 wks; now in KC hospital (Jean Mueller's son).

Joan Biest - grieving and giving thanks for her best friend.

Howard - recent heart attack; waiting next steps (Gerry Rogers' cousin)

John - fighting Covid, currently at home (Luedloff and Tossing).

Tom - healing from fusion of vertebrae (Kathleen Tarr's nephew).

Anne Brodgerski - nearing the end of her life (Svenson).

Alice - healing after spinal fusion (sister of Ellie Svenson).

Carolyn & Hank Kraichley - serious health challenges (McKenzie).

The people of Nashville, Tennessee.

Healthcare workers, homeless and many others at risk right now.

Physical 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.

Continuing

Charlotte Smith and Family - grieving/giving thanks for Dwight.

All individuals and families who are grieving this season.

Cherie & Mike Stolze - her health; her father's kidney disease.

Nelson Spencer - very serious heart condition (Ellie Svenson).

Blake - recent cancer diagnosis (Greg Schmelig).

Lori Connors - for strength, stamina through some health challenges.

Ruth Peace & Pinky Wilcoxon - PUCC sisters with health challenges.

Bill Darland - ongoing health issues.

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.

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 Memory Care Division #1001*; 15250 Olive Blvd, Chesterfield, MO 63017 [birthdate: March 31]

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

Other

President Trump, Congress, all local, national, world leaders - those continuing, starting, returning to leadership... including **Biden|Harris**.
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 January 3 - Bethany-Peace UCC, St. Louis;

<https://www.facebook.com/Bethany-Peace-United-Church-of-Christ-188016801273333/>

Week ending January 10 - <https://www.faithstreet.com/church/brentwood-congregational-church-saint-louis-mo>

An Epiphany Prayer by Bret Myers

O God of Light and Life:

We are thankful that you illuminate our dark places
and bring joy to our bright places.

Beauty and grace abound as we are made aware of your presence
in our waking, eating, working, playing, and resting.

Your Spirit encourages us to hope,
entices us to trust,

and emboldens us to love so that we might keep and create the peace
that you desire will live within us and between us.

Inspire us to be light and life to all we meet,
both near and far, family and foe, friend and stranger –
for we are all your children,
and siblings of one another. Amen

2nd Sunday after Christmas

January 3, 2021

Second Sunday after Christmas

John 1:1-18

Another Road

In a few days, Christians around the world will celebrate the feast of Epiphany. Like so many of our Christian observances, this one contains the seeming contradictions of human and divine. It is on the one hand an acknowledgement of the divine nature of Jesus, which was recognized by the Three Magi who came to visit the Christ Child. On the other hand, it is a celebration of Christ's appearance to all people, as The Magi are often thought to represent Christ's Gentile followers.

It is not uncommon to tell stories to try and make sense of our stories, especially the ones that hold contradictions like Epiphany. In Italy on this day, Italian Christians tell the legend of Befana. The story goes like this:

Befana was an old woman, who was renowned throughout the village for keeping the most meticulously clean house. All of her energy and time went into creating a beautiful home. When the three Magi followed the star through her village, they naturally stayed with her in her lovely abode. They told her about the Christ Child, whose star they followed. After a day's rest, the three began again to follow the star, and they urged Befana to come with them. Befana said no at once, for if she left the village, who would keep her house clean and neat? The more she thought about the Christ Child, the more Befana was compelled to see and know more about him. Quickly packing a bag of sweet treats and carrying a broom for the new mother, Befana hurried down the road. But the Magi had already gone on ahead. Although she hurried to catch up with them, Befana could not find the Magi and to this day she searches for the Christ Child. Although her search for the Child was not successful that night, on Epiphany Eve, Befana travels still, visiting each child in Italy. And for each child, she leaves a gift, because she now knows that the Christ Child can be found in each young person.

Questions for reflection:

How does the story of Befana help you understand the story of Epiphany in a new way? How does this story embody the paradox of this season's celebration both of Christ's divinity and his ministry to all people?

How can your life be a story that tells a story about the meaning of Epiphany?