



www.parkwayucc.org

Sunday, December 20, 2020

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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

2841 North Ballas Road | St. Louis, MO 63131 | 314-872-9330 [p] | 314-872-9014 [f] parkwayucc.org | contact@parkwayucc.org Office Hours: Mon - Thu 8:30am-3:00pm; Fri 8:30am-12:30pm

Linda Tossing, President of the Church Council [puccpresident@parkwayucc.org] Kevin Cameron, Pastor [kevin@parkwayucc.org] Barb Kuhlmann, Director of Christian Education/Youth [barbk@parkwayucc.org] Barry Luedloff, Music Director [barry@parkwayucc.org] Mona Smith Herberg, Office Administrator [mona@parkwayucc.org] Kathy Ferrell, Office Assistant [kathy@parkwayucc.org] Rich Race, Treasurer [treasurer@parkwayucc.org] Susan Thomson, Financial Administrator [finance.admin@parkwayucc.org] Julie Connors, Nursery [juliest11992@yahoo.com] Emma Pennycuick, Nursery [epennycuick1@live.maryville.edu] Joyce Ruiz, Alzheimer's Assn Faith Outreach Ambassador [JoyceRuiz7@gmail.com] Polly Rutherford, Environmental Justice/Sustainability Seekers [pollyrutherford@gmail.com] 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.

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Anniversaries

- 12/22 OWENS, Pam & Grant DOTY (31)
- 12/23 CAMERON, Kevin & Carmen BUMGARNER (25)

Birthdays

12/20	MOHL, Peggy	12/21	WAITE, Laura
12/20	STOLZE, Cherie	12/22	RACE, Richard
12/20	YAKEL, Alison	12/22	WADDELL, Cole
12/21	DAVIDSON, Lisa	12/24	SCHARF, Ingrid
12/21	DETJEN, Valerie	12/25	FAUSS, Roger
12/21	FAUSS, Donna	12/25	Jesus

4th Sunday of Advent: Love

Sunday, December 20, 2020 | 10:00am on Facebook Live

Meditation Love comes to those who still hope even though they've been disappointed, to those who still believe even though they've been betrayed, to those who still love even though they've been hurt before. ~Unknown



Lighting the Candles & Ringing the Bell

Hebrew Scripture Psalm 23

King James Version (KJV)

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Ideas on Love from 4-8 Year Olds on this Love Sunday

When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore...So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love.

When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouth.

Love is what makes you smile when you're tired.

Love is when my mommy makes coffee for my daddy and she takes a sip before giving it to him, to make sure the taste is OK.

Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen.

If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate.

Love is when you tell a kid at school that you like their shirt, even though they wear it every day.

During my piano recital, I was on a stage and I was scared. I looked at all the people watching me and saw my daddy waving and smiling. He was the only one doing that. I wasn't scared anymore.

Love is when Mommy gives Daddy the best piece of chicken.

Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day.

When you love somebody, your eyelashes go up and down and little stars come out of you.

You really shouldn't say "I love you" unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget.

A four-year-old child was next door neighbor to an elderly gentleman who had recently lost his wife. Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old gentleman's yard, climbed onto his lap, and just sat there. When his mother asked what he had said to the neighbor, the little boy said, "Nothing. I just helped him cry."

Passing the Love of Christ "May the love of Christ be with you." (We are intentional about bringing more love into the world.)

Hymn O God, We Long for Better Days

GREENSLEEVES 8.7.8.7 with Refrain What Child Is This? Tune: Traditional English melody What Child Is This? Text: Copyright © 2020 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. All rights reserved.

O God, we long for better days when we can be together, to celebrate your love and grace in Jesus Christ our Savior. We long for Silent Night in crowded pews, by candlelight. May we who stay at home now find your Christmas blessing.

We long to come and Deck the Halls this year—like many others. Yet all around we hear the calls of countless, hurting neighbors. This year, in quiet ways, we'll pray and serve and fill our days. May we who stay at home now find your Christmas blessing.

We'll still, with Christian Friends, Rejoice, by phone, or by our zooming. We'll ponder here: What Child is This? and seek A Rose, E'er Blooming. We'll love and serve and give; we'll live as Christ taught us to live. May we who stay at home now find your Christmas blessing. We long to feast and celebrate with family, friends, and neighbors Yet this can be our gift—to wait, until the times are better. Still, Still, you give us joy—a love that death cannot destroy. May we who stay at home now find your Christmas blessing.

Scripture Love

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. ~1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Let all that you do be done in love. ~1 Corinthians 16:14

For God so loved the world, that the only Son was given, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ~John 3:16

Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ~1 John 4:8

Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. ~1 Peter 4:8 $\,$

And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ~Colossians 3:14

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. ~John 13:34-35

Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. ~John 15:13

Jesus answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second commandment is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." ~Mark 12:29-31

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. ~1 John 4:18

A friend loves at all times. ~Proverbs 17:17

Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. ~Romans 12:9

Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. ~Romans 13:10

Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. ~1 John 3:18

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ~1 John 4:7-8

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. ~Romans 8:37-39

If anyone says, "I love God," and hates their sibling, they are a liar; for those who do not love their sibling whom they have seen cannot love God whom they have not seen. \sim 1 John 4:20

The Lord appeared to them from far away... "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you." ~Jeremiah 31:3

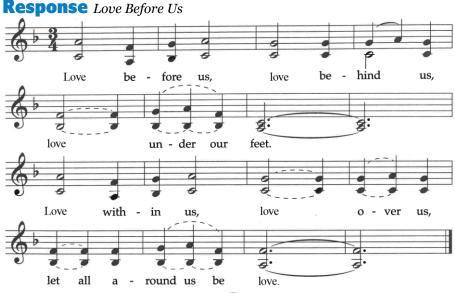
Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. ~Psalm 63:3

Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a fattened ox and hatred with it. ~Proverbs 15:17

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. Because you are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you. Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you; I will say to the north, 'Give them up', and to the south, 'Do not withhold; bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the ends of the earth.'

~lsaiah 43, selected verses

Gathering at the Advent Wreath: Love



Listening for Love

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

Blessing the Children Be Near Me, Lord Jesus

Tune: Away in a Manger

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay Close by me forever and love me, I pray Bless all the dear children in your tender care, And teach us, dear Jesus, to laugh and to share.

Gospel Lesson Matthew 1:1-18a

An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, and Aram the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of King David. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah. So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way....

Hymn God, You Wrap Your Love Around Us CONVERSE 8.7.8.7 D What a Friend We Have in Jesus

God, you wrap your love around us, Like a blanket, soft and warm. You give rest when we are weary, You protect us from the storm. May each person who finds shelter In these blankets that we share Also feel the joy and comfort Of your love's protecting care.

Jesus, you were once a baby, Sought by those who would destroy. Into Egypt you were carried — Far from home, a little boy. Were you wrapped up warm to travel,

Safe from terror, free from harm? Did you feel God's strong protection, Snuggled there in Mary's arm?

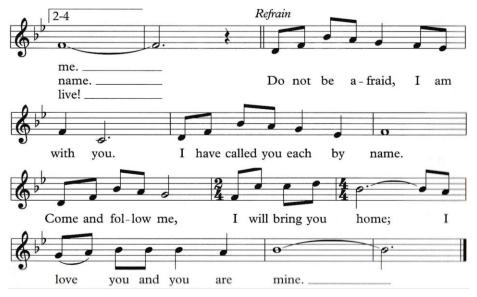
May the women, men and children Fleeing danger every day Know, through us, your living presence; You walk with them on their way. Spirit, as you give them comfort, Teach us here to freely give; May we blanket this world over With your love, so all may live.

Tune: Charles Crozat Converse, 1868 What a Friend We Have in Jesus Alternate tune: BEECHER, John Zundel, 1870 ("Love Divine, All Loves Excelling") (MIDI) Text: Copyright © 1999 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. All rights reserved.

Moment of Silent Reflection

Sermon 23 and Me

Call to Prayer You Are Mine I will in the si - lence, 1. come you to I 2. _ for all who are hope-less, am hope I am strength for all the de-spair-ing, 3. I 4. Ι am the Word that leads all to free - dom, I will lift all your fear. you from ____ T am eves for all who long to see. In the who dwell in for the ones shame. heal - ing the peace the world can - not give. am You will hear my voice, Ι claim you my choice, as be shad-ows of the night, I will be vour light, All the blind will the lame will all run free, see, and I will call your name, all your pain, em - brac - ing stand 1 still and know I am here. __ and rest in come all will know mv up, now walk, and



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.]

Mission Moment 2nd Mile Advent

Circle of Concern, Emmaus Homes, The Christmas Fund

Invitation to Generosity

Offering Our Gifts to God

Prayer of Dedication

Holy One here—and not yet here—we are grateful for the gift of Your love, which is beyond our understanding. Thank You for the glimpses of You and the ability to share You with others. May these gifts be expressions of our gratitude. Let them link us with You, with each other, and with the world you hold in Your peace embrace. May these gifts be messages of hope and beacons of light against the darkness in our world. May they even bring joy! Amen. **Song** Love Came Down at Christmas



Benediction

God's Light Goes Forth

Announcements

Join us for Pre-recorded Christmas Eve Worship

Thursday, December 24 | 4:30 & 7:00pm | YouTube

...Links will be sent in a separate email early next week...

While a number of the pieces of the two worship services will mirror each other (e.g. *Silent Night* by candlelight), the 4:30pm service will feature several object lessons woven within the Christmas Gospel Story. We will celebrate the sacrament of communion at our *open table* at 7:30pm—remember to have your bread/crackers and wine/grape juice or whatever for this simple, sacred meal.

Please let others know about our Christmas Eve Worship that they can experience in their own home.

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.

Year End Contributions

As year-end quickly approaches, a reminder that if you are making a Contribution via PayPal, it will need to be made by December 21st in order to be included in the 2020 Contributions.

Please remember that Parkway UCC does not receive your full contribution if it is made through PayPal. PayPal keeps up to 3% as their fee.

2nd Mile Advent

We continue to receive your gifts for 2nd Mile Advent—an opportunity to stretch our hope, peace, joy and love across the area and the wider church. All gifts are shared evenly among the three mission partners in January. Please clearly mark your financial gift "2nd Mile Advent." You may want to honor someone in your life with a 2nd Mile Gift—perhaps that person who is hard to buy for and/or who does not have any real needs right now. We are grateful for your generosity.

Circle of Concern circleofconcern.org/

Each day, Circle of Concern feeds families from the food pantry, shares financial assistance, and distribute school supplies, Thanksgiving turkeys or holiday gifts.

Mission: Circle of Concern feeds the hungry and provides assistance to lowincome families living in west St. Louis County.

Our Vision: Improving every life in the community by reducing hunger and poverty

Our Values: integrity in all they do; respecting the innate worth of every Circle stakeholder, including clients, volunteers, donors, staff and community partners, and striving to reflect that respect in every interaction; collaborating with many partners so that the work of Circle is successfully accomplished; being responsible stewards of the time stakeholders donate, the talents they share and the funds they invest; committing to excellence which ensures the highest quality services for clients today and the resources to sustain them in the future.

Emmaus Homes emmaushomes.org/

Emmaus Homes knows that adults with disabilities want to be independent. In order to do that, they need a home and a community that embraces their unique abilities. EH believes everyone deserves the resources needed to live independently.

EH understands it's tough to manage life alone, which is why for 125 years, as a faith-based organization, they have provided high-quality service caring for the whole person for their whole life – including the individual's spiritual life.

The Christmas Fund pbucc.org/index.php/christmas-fund-home The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

Over the past nine months, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the emergency financial needs of many who serve the church have increased dramatically. In such a time as this, the need for the Christmas Fund is more urgent than ever.

Prayer List as of December 16, 2020

Celebrations

All the acts of kindness that are happening near and far! The momentum toward justice and equity. Advent - our journey to Christmas! Sue and Paul Stohr - settling into their new home... Mason Pointe Independent Living 13198 S Outer 40 Rd; Apt 143; Town & Country MO 63017 Melissa - Master of Education Degree (Gerry/Mike Rogers' daughter).

Concerns

Jim Winkelmann - in rehab hospital healing after stroke. Cassie Rosenberger - healing from Covid-19. Tom - neck surgery... fusion of vertebrae (Kathleen Tarrs's nephew). Anne Brodginski - nearing end of her life this week (Svenson). Justin Williamson - healing (Svenson). Steve - very ill with Covid-19 (cousin of Barb Kuhlmann). Tommy Kurz 14 yr old - recuperating from surgery to alleviate seizures. Carolyn & Hank Kraichley - serious health challenges (McKenzie). 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. Those affected by natural disasters vesterday/today/tomorrow

Continuing

Charlotte Smith and Family - grieving/giving thanks for Dwight.
Charlotte Smith, 3337 Lake Bend Dr, Valley Park, MO 63088.
Bob Boyd and family - as they grieve and give thanks for Karen.
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 Wilcoxen - 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 December 20 - Mt Tabor UCC, St Louis; mounttaborucc.org Week ending December 27 - Calvary UCC, St Louis; calvaryucc.org

Little Tree by e.e. cummings little tree - little silent Christmas tree vou are so little - you are more like a flower who found you in the green forest and were you very sorry to come away? see i will comfort you - because you smell so sweetly i will kiss your cool bark - and hug you safe and tight just as your mother would, only don't be afraid look the spangles that sleep all the year in a dark box dreaming of being taken out and allowed to shine. the balls the chains red and gold the fluffy threads, put up vour little arms and i'll give them all to you to hold every finger shall have its ring and there won't be a single place dark or unhappy...

Your Sanctuary Misses You (A Love Letter)

~Maren Tirabassi

I miss you a lot – I miss the organ vibrating under my floor, an anthem that tickles the ceiling. I miss being splashed with baptism, the grit of thrown rice, the weight of the casket when you let a loved one go.

I miss the smell of bread cut in small-enough-everyone-eats pieces. I miss people leaning over pew or chair back to say "peace" or "hello," or smile at a child.

I even miss prickly poinsettias, lilies that make me sneeze, and the time it rained and animals came inside to be blessed.

Puppy piddle or hot wax from those little candles? It doesn't matter – I miss you.

But, while you care for one another by being away ... (well, you'd know I exaggerate if I promised to self-dust the hymnals), I do promise to archive in my heart every song you've sung and all the voices, even ones who only came here once, even those who pretend to sing.

The pulpit has endured preacher spit and watching congregations doze, but it will store all that justice and comfort.

Even if you re-model me someday, or put me on a flatbed and roll me down the street, even if ... I burn down, all of the memories will be in this ground and all the sky, (some photographs to make you cry) and lives changed, lots of lives changed forever.

Now before I go on too long, like a wandering sermon or a flat note held – and this is really a Christmas card, I want you to remember this – your loving sanctuary was never the manger, or the field outside Bethlehem, or an oasis under a star, though pageants, carols, and those drippy little candles might confuse you.

I'm just the inn, and my job is to say to you – and everyone else – I am full (of many good things), but go around back to the stable in your heart and there you will find the child with Mary and Joseph and the sweet mash-up of woolies, camels and angel host.

That's why I miss you most.

A sanctuary can store a lot of hay – but you are the manger.

4th Sunday of Advent

December 20, 2020

Birthing a Promise

Luke 1:26-38 Christmas Fund Offering

Today is the fourth Sunday of Advent, the season of watchful waiting for the coming of the Christ Child. If you have practiced a ritual of lighting Advent candles, either in community or in your own home, then this Sunday you will light all four candles. As we do, we celebrate and acknowledge the gifts of this season - Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

On this fourth Sunday of Advent, we are also invited to receive the Christmas Fund Offering. As the promise of God's light and presence shines through the advent candles, we can bring hope, peace, joy, and love to those we honor with our special offering. Soon it will be time to put the advent wreath away for another year. But through your gift to the Christmas Fund Offering, you can keep hope, peace, joy, and love alive all year long for those who have served the church.

The Christmas Fund funds four programs: Christmas Thank You Checks, Pension Supplementation, Health Benefits, and Emergency Grants.

Christmas Thank You Checks are for retired United Church of Christ clergy and lay employees. Retirees with limited financial resources receive a gift at Christmas time as a way of saying "thank you" for years of service to the UCC. Last year, more than a quarter million dollars was given to 521 individuals, and the number of those helped increases every year.

Pension Supplementation is for lower-income retired United Church of Christ clergy and lay employees. These are monthly payments designed to bring household incomes up to a basic level to be able to afford basic needs like food, utilities, and medical expenses.

Health Benefits supplementation is for lower-income retired UCC clergy and lay employees who may receive assistance in paying Medicare premiums.

Emergency Grants are for currently active or retired clergy or lay employees who are facing unforeseen circumstances that create financial need.

Give to the Christmas Fund at: https://www.pbucc.org/index.php/christmas-fund-home.