

Christmas Eve 2020



PARKWAY
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

December 24, 2020
7:30pm



Thursday, December 24, 2020

Contents

- 3 7:00pm Worship
- 9 Announcements

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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Office Hours: Mon - Thu 8:30am-3:00pm; Fri 8:30am-12:30pm

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- John Nourse, *Pastor Emeritus*

Christmas Eve

Thursday December 24, 2020 | 7:30pm | Pre-recorded on YouTube

Prelude on Organ and Piano *Venite Adoremus*

Tune: *Adeste Fideles* arr. Roger C. Wilson
Performed by Barry Luedloff and Angie Downing

Meditation *Christmas, my child, is love in action. Every time we love, every time we give, it's Christmas.* ~Dale Evans Rogers

Introit *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

Iris Cameron, Bonnie Lang, Marty Stoecker

Lighting the Candles & Ringing the Bell Dexter Cameron

Call to Worship *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

Alex Roesler and Stephanie Polster

Gathering at the Advent Wreath: The Christ Candle

Iris Cameron

One: We have come slowly these last four weeks of Advent,

Many: Lighting candles and gathering gifts along the way.

One: We have found hope and it carries us.

Many: We have found peace and it calms us.

One: We have found joy and it bubbles up inside of us.

Many: We have found love that calls us by name—and holds us close.

One: And now we come this night to greet the Christ Child.

Many: Jesus comes into the world so that we can experience God fully.

One: Jesus will grow up and show us how to share our hope, peace, joy and love with others.

Many: We are ready to learn again and again about these gifts.

All: We commit to being these gifts to others. The Spirit moves us toward one another.

Centering in the Light of Christ John 1:1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Response *Christ Before Us*

Christ be - fore us, Christ be - hind us,
Christ em - brace us, Christ o - ver us,
Christ un - der our skin.
let all a - round us be Christ.

The musical score is written on four staves in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are: "Christ be - fore us, Christ be - hind us, Christ em - brace us, Christ o - ver us, Christ un - der our skin. let all a - round us be Christ." The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and half notes, along with dynamic markings like *mf* and *f*. Dashed lines and circles highlight specific melodic phrases and rhythmic patterns.

Listening for Jesus

Response *Three Great Loves @PUCC*

Christopher Grundy

Love of Children, Love of Neighbor, Love of Creation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Glsmao2PgFg&feature=youtu.be>

Hebrew Scripture Lesson *Isaiah 9, selected verses*

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Parent, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Response *The Angel Gabriel*

Cindy, Summer and Yara Changyit Levin

Children's Message and Blessing the Children

(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.**

Invitation to Generosity

Offertory *Noel*

St Louis Children's Choirs

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.

A Christmas Call to Action

Luke 2:1-4, Ellie Svenson

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David.

Homegoing

**O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

Luke 2:5-7, Ellie Svenson

Joseph went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Expecting

**Away in a manger, no crib for His bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.**

Luke 2:8-11, Ellie Svenson

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.”

Keeping Watch

**While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
all seated on the ground,
the messenger of God came down
and glory shone around, and glory shone around.
“Fear not,” the angel said, “for dread
had seized their troubled mind.
Glad tidings of great joy I bring
to you and all of humankind, to all of humankind.”**

Luke 2:12-14, Ellie Svenson

The angel said to them, “This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favors!”

Lying

**Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing,
Come, adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo... Gloria, in excelsis Deo.**

Luke 2:15-20, Ellie Svenson

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Returning

Response *Mary, Did You Know?*

Cassie Schulenburg

Invitation to the Communion Table

Call to Prayer *Drawing Nearer*

Christopher Grundy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=udLJ3uDIMIQ>

Pastoral Prayer 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.]

Breaking Bread & Pouring Wine

Communion Interlude *Still, Still* ~ Greg Schmelig

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Holy One, may this simple sacred meal bring us closer to You and one another. Help us to feel Jesus' hope, peace, joy and love moving through our minds, bodies, spirits and relationships. We have witnessed this birth story again. Now we go in its tenderness and intensity. We commit to being gifts to one other - even to the stranger. The Spirit moves us toward one another. We are available, vulnerable, flexible. Melt us, mold us, fill us, use us. Amen.

Sharing the Light of Christ in the sanctuary and in your home

Congregational Carol *Silent Night*, Bonnie Lang, Marty Stoecker

[The first verse in German links us to our church's German founders.]

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht! Alles schläft, einsam wacht

*Nur das traute, hochheilige Paar. Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh', Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh'!*

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright,

Round yon virgin mother and child!

Holy Infant, so tender and mild.

Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight,

Glories stream from heaven afar,

Heavenly hosts sing: Alleluia,

Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light

Radiant beams from Thy holy face,

with the dawn of redeeming grace,

Jesus Lord, at Thy birth. Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth

Benediction

Extinguishing Candles, Becoming Light Sarah Machado

Postlude Piano & Organ E. L. Ashford; arr. Dorothy Strohman

Angie Downing and Barry Luedloff

Announcements

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.

Join Us for Tuesday Afternoon Dialogue (TAD) Jan 5

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

TED has a new sibling! Introducing TAD, Tuesday afternoon Dialogue, a Zoom book discussion group. Everyone is welcome. We are meeting the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month. The book we have selected is *Almost Everything: Notes on Hope* by Anne Lamott—an exploration of hope and the place it holds in our lives. Copies are available through local bookstores, Amazon, and local libraries. We hope to see you on Zoom. Questions or comments? 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 1/12/21)

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 not only how we have arrived at our own personal beliefs but 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=eIVDSVVUMHZZeStLZIBLeEZjWVBVZz09>

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

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

Subscribe to our email lists: Text your email address to 22828 or sign up from the homepage of our website or this direct link:

<https://tinyurl.com/PUCCemail>

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 low-income 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.

My Christmas Tree

Kathleen Tarr, Parkway UCC member in Ohio

Something old, something new -
Used to start a bride and groom on their path of life.
But now my something old, something new is seen in my Christmas tree -
That ancient symbol of life.

Something old -
Spanning and remembering generations
Something new - to make it mine.

My Grandmother's star on top.
Singing as it did at the farm.
Her home, my mother's childhood home.

Stars my Mother made of paper.
Lovingly straightened by my hands
New stars carefully folded by me hang to reflect hers.

Holly from Glendora, my childhood home.
Pine cones from the tree at Tom and Dorothy's house,
A tree that was once our Christmas Tree.
New pine cones from right outside my door.
All gilded gold, reflecting the light.

Old ornaments passed through the generations and years,
Bulbs and icicles.

Close by, new ornaments, picked out by me,
Shiny, sparkling.
Birds from trees and places past.

And memorials.

Hummels for Mom.

Bat and ball for Dad.

Spun heart and painted star hang side by side.

Remembering, reaching across time
With love that will never die.

They are all with me - on my tree.

Become familiar with these *Listening Stones* in anticipation of this Sunday's worship experience at 10am on YouTube – https://youtu.be/c_sAgtMZF8o

HOLY LISTENING STONES TO CUT OUT



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