

*That all may know  
Christ's love...*



**PARKWAY**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Sunday, September 5, 2021



[www.parkwayucc.org](http://www.parkwayucc.org)

Sunday, September 5, 2021

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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 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](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 Monday.

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## Birthdays

9/5 ALLISON, Vivian

9/7 BOWERMASTER, Kathryn

9/5 STAPPENBECK, Julie

9/7 EIFFERT, Jackie

9/7 BIEST, Emily

9/7 YESS, Makenzie

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

Sunday, September 5, 2021 | 10:00am | Sanctuary & Facebook Live

**Meditation** *Faith is laughter in our pain, joy in pleasures that remain, trust in one we can't explain. ~Mary Nelson Keithahn*

**Welcome** Let us know you are here!

## Passing the Peace of Christ

“May the peace of Christ be with you.”

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

## Prelude

## Lighting of the Candles & Ringing of the Bell

## Welcome Song *Open My Eyes that I May See*, v1



1. O - pen my eyes, that I may see Glimps - es of truth Thou hast for me;
2. O - pen my ears, that I may hear Voic - es of truth Thou send - est clear;
3. O - pen my mouth, and let me bear Glad - ly the warm truth ev - ery - where;



Place in my hands the won - der - ful key That shall un - clasp and set me free.  
And while the wave notes fall on my ear, Ev - ery - thing false will dis - ap - pear.  
O - pen my heart, and let me pre - pare Love with Thy chil - dren thus to share.

*Refrain*



Si - lent - ly now I wait for Thee, Read - y, my God, Thy will to see;



eyes,  
O - pen my ears, il - lu - mine me, Spir - it di - vine!  
heart,

## Scripture Mark 7:31-37 (CEB – Common English Bible)

Greg Schmelig

After leaving the region of Tyre, Jesus went through Sidon toward the Galilee Sea through the region of the Ten Cities. Some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly speak, and they begged him to place his hand on the man for healing. Jesus took him away from the crowd by himself and put his fingers in the man's ears.

Then he spit and touched the man’s tongue. Looking into heaven, Jesus sighed deeply and said, “Ephphatha,” which means, “Open up.” At once, his ears opened, his twisted tongue was released, and he began to speak clearly.

Jesus gave the people strict orders not to tell anyone. But the more he tried to silence them, the more eagerly they shared the news. People were overcome with wonder, saying, “He does everything well! He even makes the deaf to hear and gives speech to those who can’t speak.”

**\*Call to Worship**

One:	From the farthest reaches of our separate lives, we gather.
Many:	<b>With our struggles and questions, our doubts and certainties, our joys and our sorrows.</b>
One:	And even before we speak, or sing, or move, or sit in silence, God is here—with us, for us.
All:	<b>Let us worship our God together—Creator, Christ and Spirit.</b>

**\*Song** *As a Fire is Meant for Burning*

1. As a fire is meant for burn - ing with a bright and warm-ing  
 2. We are learn - ers; we are teach - ers; we are pil - grims on the  
 3. As a green bud in the spring-time is a sign of life re -

flame, so the church is meant for mis - sion, giv - ing  
 way. We are seek - ers; we are giv - ers; we are  
 newed, so may we be signs of one - ness 'mid earth's

glo - ry to God's name. Not to preach our creeds or  
 ves - sels made of clay. By our gen - tle, lov - ing  
 peo - ples, man - y hued. As a rain - bow lights the

cus - toms, but to build a bridge of care, we join  
 ac - tions we would show that Christ is light. In a  
 heav - ens when a storm is past and gone, may our

hands a - cross the na - tions, find - ing neigh - bors ev - ery - where.  
 hum - ble, lis - tening Spir - it we would live to God's de - light.  
 lives re - flect the ra - diance of God's new and glo - rious dawn.



## \*Opening Prayer

O God, you are our God and we are your people. We come with songs aching to be sung, with words aching to be spoken, with questions aching to be answered, with feelings aching to be expressed, with arms aching for embracing. We come with wounds aching to be healed, with emptiness aching to be filled, with joy aching to overflow.

Let your love soak into the spirit and skin like soothing salve, and leave a tingle where there once was an ache, so that all may say they have met with God today, and everyone was touched and no one was turned away. Amen.

## \*Response *Spirit of the Living God*

Spirit of the living God fall afresh on me;

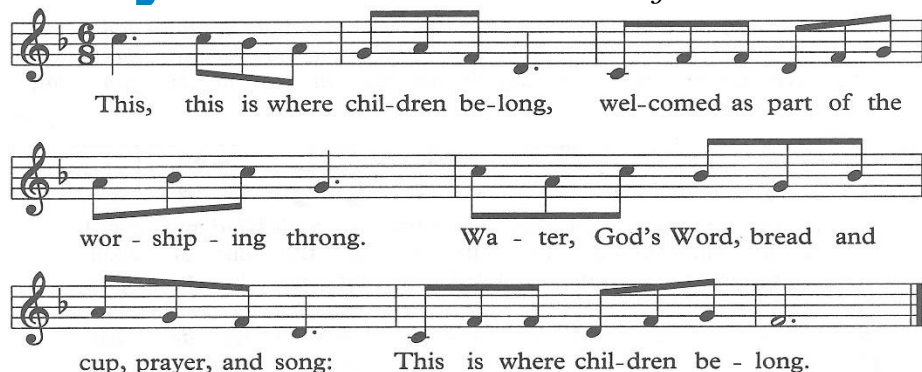
Spirit of the living God fall afresh on me.

Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me!

Spirit of the living God fall afresh on me.

**Children's Time** Children are invited to Room 12 (lower level) and Youth to Room 15 (lower level) following this Children's Time. We will also be on Zoom for those at home. We continue to require masks for all.

## Blessing the Children *Where Children Belong*



This, this is where chil-dren be-long, wel-comed as part of the  
wor - ship - ing throng. Wa - ter, God's Word, bread and  
cup, prayer, and song: This is where chil-dren be - long.

## Offering Our Gifts to God

### \*Response

Praise God whose many names abound;

Our Peace, our Rock, Our Holy Ground,

Our Home, our All, Earth's Majesty,

Love, Spirit, Light and Mystery. Amen.

### \*Prayer of Dedication *The Mustard Seed*

We make our offerings of all shapes and sizes and forms, 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 reign. May God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven through us, alongside us, despite us, and for us. Amen.

**Scripture** James 2:14-17 (NRSV - New Revised Standard Version)

Greg Schmelig

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

## Moment of Silent Reflection

## Sermon

**Invitation to the Communion Table** We invite *all* to this **open table**. All accepted—no exceptions—as we commit ourselves to limitless love, courageous action and spirited inquiry.

So often this invitation to Communion calls you to "come" to an altar rail or a table—mind, heart, spirit, sometimes body.

Today you are reminded of this other truth—Communion always comes to us. We don't "make it" with our baking, our pouring or our prayers.

God is so wildly generous, no one needs to move an inch. Please stay put, wherever and whoever you are, Communion with God is coming to you. Prepare to welcome your Guest.


## Communion Song *Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love*

Je - su, Je - su, fill us with Your love, Show *Fine*  
us how to serve the neigh-bors we have from You.

1. Kneels at the feet of His friends,
2. Neigh-bors are rich and poor,
3. These are the ones we should serve,
4. Lov - ing puts us on our knees,
5. Kneel at the feet of our friends,

Si - lent - ly wash - es their  
Var - ied in col - or and  
These are the ones we should  
Serv - ing as though we are  
Si - lent - ly wash - ing their

D.C.



feet,	Mas - ter who acts as a slave	to them.
race,	Neigh-bors are near and far	a - way.
love.	All are neigh-bors to us	and You.
slaves,	This is the way we should live	with You.
feet,	This is the way we should live	with You.

## Pastoral Prayer & Prayers of the People

One: We remember so many different tables of Jesus—his acceptance of hospitality from Peter’s mother-in-law and Martha; from Simon so suspicious of the people around; Zacchaeus, love-venture capitalist; and one boy with a small picnic lunch.

We remember Jesus learning the reality lesson about who eats *on* and who eats *under* the tables of the world from a Syrophoenician woman, and his teaching his disciples that lesson another evening - gently and with foot washing.

We remember the Passover meal with a betrayer and a denier present, and everyone scared and so confused.

Jesus used what was familiar, bread already on the table and a cup from which they had drunk.

Always, even today, in the accessible ordinary - anyone can reach the holiest food, and even a single cupped hand can hold this rush of wet blessing.

**All: Holy God, bless every bread near the mouth of any one of your children - so that it becomes the strength and hope and holiness each of us needs. Bless the small plastic cup or the beautiful chalice —and every glass in between—that reminds us that we can never spill your love and we always - and in all places - drink in your healing. Amen.**

## 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/Juice

### \*Prayer of Thanksgiving Maren Tirabassi

**O God, we give you thanks that no one is over your table and no one is under your table, but that we all share your love together. We are in the midst of difficult times for all your children—illness, fire, heat, storm, earthquake, violence—and particular sorrows and griefs and decisions for those we know.**



We are so grateful that you have brought this Communion to us, so we may surround with its strength and comfort those we know, and search out those we do not know to offer hope and help widely and freely. Amen.

### **\*Song of Parting** *We All Are One in Mission*



1. We all are one in mis - sion; we all are one in call,
2. We all are called for ser - vice, to wit - ness in God's name.
3. Now let us be u - nit - ed, and let our song be heard.



our var - ied gifts u - nit - ed by Christ, the Lord of all.  
Our min - is - tries are dif - ferent; our pur - pose is the same:  
Now let us be a ves - sel for God's re - deem - ing Word.



A sin - gle great com - mis - sion com - pels us from a - bove  
To touch the lives of oth - ers by God's sur - pris - ing grace,  
We all are one in mis - sion; we all are one in call,



to plan and work to - geth - er that all may know Christ's love.  
so ev - ery folk and na - tion may feel God's warm em - brace.  
our var - ied gifts u - nit - ed by Christ, the Lord of all.

### **\*Benediction**

### **\*God's Light Goes Forth**

### **\*Music for Going Forth**

# Announcements

## Habitat for Humanity Volunteers Wanted 9/11

Habitat for Humanity is resuming volunteer workdays. If you would like to volunteer as an individual on Saturday, September 11, please contact Rev. Keith Karau at: [keith.karau@gmail.com](mailto:keith.karau@gmail.com)

Also, Parkway is hoping to get some volunteer spots on either October 30 or November 20th. More info on that as it becomes available. Please put it on your calendar. HFH is asking for 4 volunteers per church, so please contact Tom McKenzie: [mckenzie1947@att.net](mailto:mckenzie1947@att.net) or 314-567-0420.

The work site is in the 3400 block of Park Ave., St. Louis, MO, just East of Cardinal Glennon Hospital. Please make any contributions to: Habitat for Humanity Saint Louis | 3830 South Grand Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63118

It is important to make the donation to Habitat for Humanity *St. Louis* so it will go to our local affiliate.

## The Parkway Speakers Series Presentations for Fall

Sundays | 11:15am | Heritage Room and ZOOM

September 12

*Keep Calm and Wash Your Hands, Another Pandemic Update* by John Russell, PhD. It's not over, is it? Questions abound. To the rescue is Dr. John Russell.

September 26

*The Wonders of Poetry* by Dottie Dwyer. Dottie Dwyer returns to take us on another amazing tour of the wonders of poetry.

October 10 and 17

*The Twists and Turns of the Law of Divorce in Missouri* by Judge Tom Frawley. Divorce is the death of a dream you thought was going to last. If you have some insights into the law and the process, you may be more helpful and effective in offering care and empathy.

November 14 and 21

*Critical Race Theory* by David Spener, Professor of Sociology at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas and an adjunct professor in the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas in Austin. He teaches Critical Race Theory, a body of scholarship and an academic movement that seeks to critically examine the intersection of race and US law. (Youth are encouraged to attend too).

December 5

*The Fall of County Executive Steve Stenger* by Winston Calvert. Winston is a senior member of the current St. Louis County Executive's office. He observed the downfall of Stenger as it unfolded, and will share his views and observations, some of which may not generally be known by the public.

*All of these presentations are currently scheduled in the Heritage Room following worship, as well as on Zoom. Some are live, others have or will be prerecorded. Those that are prerecorded will be available for televising in the Heritage Room and on Parkway's YouTube channel. Watch for any changes as our season moves along.*

**Zoom Link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84691476997?pwd=aEM2ZURYWURLNmkw0EzV0VHVllyQT09>

**Meeting ID:** 846 9147 6997 | **Passcode:** 181565 | **Dial in:** (312) 626-6799

We welcome your suggestions for potential speakers in 2022. Please pass those along to Richard Scherrer.

## **Crop Walk 2021**

Sunday, October 24 | 4:30 check in | 5:00pm walk | Eden Seminary: 475 E Lockwood Ave, Webster Groves MO 63119

The 2021 CROP HUNGER WALK will be a hybrid event. For those who feel safe gathering in person to walk together, we shall gather on Sunday, October 24 at Eden Seminary, 475 Lockwood Ave, in Webster Groves 63119--check in 4:30PM and Walk at 5:00PM. However, participants may also register for the Walk, and they may choose to walk wherever and whenever they wants or in small groups. For more details and to register, raise funds, and/or donate:

<https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2021/event/saintlouismo>

Type in Parkway UCC where you may join the team or make a donation

The CROP CONCERT will follow the CROP Walk at 7:00PM in the Wehrli Chapel at Eden Seminary Covid Precautions will be in place.

Contact Sue Moellering: [susieqslp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:susieqslp@sbcglobal.net)

## **Walk to End Alzheimer's**

Saturday, October 23 | 10:00am | The Enterprise Center

The Walk to End Alzheimer's is scheduled for Sat. Oct. 23, 2021. The Greater Missouri Chapter is moving forward with plans to host the walk in person downtown at The Enterprise Center. They will continue to offer options to participate online and in your neighborhood for those who prefer to socially distance. It could be, as last year, and be everywhere: on every sidewalk, track and trail. COVID will again dictate. The Parkway team page:

[https://act.alz.org/site/Donation2?df\\_id=47035&PROXY\\_ID=667857&PROXY\\_TYPE=22&FR\\_ID=14598](https://act.alz.org/site/Donation2?df_id=47035&PROXY_ID=667857&PROXY_TYPE=22&FR_ID=14598)

You can learn more by going to [www.alz.org/help-support/resources](http://www.alz.org/help-support/resources) or the Alzheimer's Helpline which 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. Want to learn more about the Alzheimer's Association and what they do here in St. Louis? Visit [alz.org](http://alz.org) and/or contact PUCC's Faith Outreach Ambassador with the Alzheimer's Association, Joyce Ruiz at [joyceruiz7@gmail.com](mailto:joyceruiz7@gmail.com).

# Prayer List

as of Wednesday, September 1, 2021

## Celebrations

**All the acts of kindness, justice and equity near and far!**

**All students, families, teachers, staff, admins back in school.**

**Mia Alexandra Schulenburg Baptism** - daughter of Kaylyn/David.

**The Paralympics.**

**PUCC Weddings this weekend** - Melissa and Stephen; Kenzie Patrick and Nick Nouri; Paul Sableman and Shantel Sheppard. Blessings to you!

## Concerns

**Carol Wilbois' daughter Kim** - open heart surgery went well today.

**John Nourse** and family - grieving and giving thanks for Audrey. Visitation here on Friday, September 10 from 4-7pm; Memorial Service here on Saturday at 1pm; Burial across the street in Elm Lawn Cemetery.

<https://www.stlfuneral.com/obituaries/Audrey-Nourse/#!/Obituary>

**Dan & Kim, Ben/Henry/Davis Weas** - Dan's cancer treatments.

**Kathleen Tarr** - having a cardiac procedure on September 8.

**All impacted by Covid-19** - individuals, families, healthcare workers; including the family of Mike (PUCC friend) - mourning/celebrating him.

If anyone needs support or if anyone vaccinated would like to be on the Care Team, please reach out to [kevin@parkwayucc.org](mailto:kevin@parkwayucc.org); 314-330-0629

**Caregivers of all shapes and sizes.**

**All that is happening with storms/wildfires in the US.**

**The humanitarian crisis in Cuba.**

**The aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti.**

**The turmoil in Afghanistan** - including the Afghani and US deaths.

## Continuing

**Cindy & Ralf and Andrew Wessel** - grieving Tyler.

**Skip Larson**, Karen Nolte, Janet Prendergast - remembering Ellie.

**Ralph Hoffmann** and family - grieving & giving thanks for Brenda.

<https://www.schrader.com/obituary/brenda-hoffman>

**Mary Maxeiner** - healing after knee replacement surgery.

**Joan and Larry Brannigan** - continuing health concerns for Larry.

**Sr. Mary Kay McKenzie** - diagnosed with stage 4 cancer (Tom's sis).

**Val** - surgery to stabilize fractures in her back (Jim Winkelmann's mom).

**Bob** - continues to struggle with Parkinson's but is doing a bit better.

**Christopher, Gail & Bill Haack** - chronic health challenges.

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

**Lori Connors** - for strength, stamina through 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.

**Grateful Tran** - half-way house, new skills, schizophrenia (Buretta).

**The extended Eggebrecht Family** - healing and wholeness.

## Home/Care Facility/Rehab Center

**Carol Aston** - *Sunrise on Clayton*; 7920 Clayton Rd, #122;

Richmond Hts, MO 63117; 314-646-7600. [birthdate: December 12]

**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]

**Sue Houser** - *Bethany Ctr for Rehab & Healing*; 421 Ocala Dr - #209B;

Nashville, TN 37211; 615-577-2049. [birthdate: July 8]

**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]

**Ruth Peace** - 10379-D Forest Brooke Ln; StL MO 63146; 314-983-0253;

meadletter222@gmail.com [birthdate: August 8]

**Pearl Sellenriek** - *Friendship Village Memory Care Division* #1001;

15250 Olive Blvd, Chesterfield, MO 63017 [birthdate: March 31]

**Pinky Wilcoxon** - 10379-D Forest Brooke Ln; StL MO 63146;

314-983-0253; meadletter222@gmail.com [birthdate: April 7]

## Other

**Pres Biden, VP Harris, Congress**, all local, national, world leaders.

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

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

**Individuals in all levels of leadership** as they make decisions today.

**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.

**Gun violence and other violence across the US and other lands.**

**Conversations about the Death Penalty** in the United States.

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

**Peace and Justice** near and far.

**Healing of relationships between the public and the police.**

**US Military** around the globe.

**The people of politically unstable countries across the globe.**

**Peace in the Mid-East.**

## St Louis Assn UCC Covenant Partner

*Week ending September 5* - **St Lucas UCC**, St Louis; stlucasucc.org

*Week ending September 12* - **St Luke’s UCC**, Imperial; stlukesimperial.org

## Prayer for Peace - Lao Tse

If there is peace in the world, there must be peace in nations,

If there is peace in the nations, there must be peace in cities,

If there is peace between cities, there must be peace in neighbors,

If there is peace in the neighbors, there must be peace in home,

If there is peace in the home, there must be peace in heart.



## In Celebration of Three PUCC Weddings this Wkend

### 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

### Touched By an Angel - Maya Angelou

We, unaccustomed to courage  
exiles from delight  
live coiled in shells of loneliness  
until love leaves its high holy temple  
and comes into our sight  
to liberate us into life.

Love arrives  
and in its train come ecstasies  
old memories of pleasure  
ancient histories of pain.  
Yet if we are bold,  
love strikes away the chains of fear  
from our souls.

We are weaned from our timidity  
In the flush of love's light  
we dare be brave  
And suddenly we see  
that love costs all we are  
and will ever be.  
Yet it is only love  
which sets us free.

### A Vow - Wendy Cope

I cannot promise never to be angry;  
I cannot promise always to be kind.  
You know what you're taking on, my darling  
It's only at the start that love is blind.  
And yet I'm still the one you want to be with  
And you're the one for me – of that I'm sure.  
You're my closest friend, my favorite person,  
The lover and the home I've waited for.  
I cannot promise that I will deserve you  
From this day on. I hope to pass that test.  
I love you, and I want to make you happy.  
I promise I will do my very best.

### **On Marriage - Kahlil Gibran**

You were born together, and together you shall be forever more.  
You shall be together when the white wings of death scatter your days.

Yes, you shall be together even in the silent memory of God.

But let there be spaces in your togetherness.

And let the winds of heaven dance between you.

Love one another, but make not a bond of love.

Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls.

Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup.

Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf.

Sing and dance together and be joyous, but each one of you be alone--even as the strings of a lute are alone though the quiver with the same music.

Give your hearts, but not in each other's keeping.

For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts.

And stand together yet not too near together:

For the pillars of the temple stand apart,

And the oak tree and the Cyprus grow not in each other's shadows

### **The Art of Marriage - Wilferd A. Peterson...**

The little things are the big things. It is never being too old to hold hands.

It is remembering to say "I love you" at least once a day.

It is never going to sleep angry.

It is at no time taking the other for granted;

the courtship should not end with the honeymoon,

it should continue through all the years.

It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways.

It is not expecting the husband to wear a halo or the wife to have wings of an angel.

It is not looking for perfection in each other.

It is cultivating flexibility, patience, understanding and a sense of humor.

It is having the capacity to forgive and forget.

It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow.

It is finding room for the things of the spirit.

It is a common search for the good and the beautiful. It is establishing a relationship in which the independence is equal, dependence is mutual, and the obligation is reciprocal.

It is not only marrying the right partner, but also being the right partner.

### **Some Things Go Together - Charlotte Zolotow**

Pigeons with park

Stars with dark

Sand with sea... and you with me.

Hats with heads

Pillows with beds

Sky with blue... and me with you.

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

Sunday, September 5, 2021

Mark 7:24-37

*Be Opened*

A woman comes to Jesus, asking for healing. Because this woman does not follow the same religion as Jesus and his followers, he at first turns her away. Did you catch that? It bears repeating in case you did not. Jesus refuses to heal the woman because she does not follow the same religion. Even Jesus cannot see past his notions of right and wrong, black and white, in and out.

But we have this story because the woman startles Jesus into changing his mind. Not only is her child healed, but Jesus and those who followed him then and follow him now are forever changed.

Even Jesus has to change his mind sometimes. Even Jesus has to pivot away from his entrenched beliefs to embrace a new way. Even Jesus has to be uncomfortably challenged before he can imagine a new way of doing ministry and healing those in need in his community.

This story is a powerful encouragement to those in leadership positions in church, who fear that change in this 21st context of ministry is both inevitable and impossible. Like Jesus, may you discover that while the only constant is change, you can be who you need to be to lead in these changing times. Jesus himself went through the process of recognizing that what he had been doing was no longer fruitful. Even Jesus saw that it was imperative that he open his heart and mind to new possibilities.

In her book, *Dynamic Discernment: Reason, Emotion, and Power in Change Leadership*, Sarah B. Drummond notes that she has studied change for more than two decades and in that time, she has “found that even change is changing.” She has uncovered “dramatic shifts in the language we use for the role of leader in bringing about change.” But change itself is not the end of the story. “Throughout the history of God’s interaction with creation, we see God providing the resources to face that which is uncertain and new.”\*

What tools is God providing you in this time of rapid change? How can you make the best use of those tools? What prayer can you offer to our Christ, who shows us how to change our minds?

\*Drummond, Sarah B. - *Dynamic Discernment: Reason, Emotion, and Power in Change Leadership*. The Pilgrim Press, 2019.