



# Moving with Mary's Song



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

Sunday, December 19, 2021

---

## Contents

- 3 Birthdays & Anniversaries
- 4 10:00am Worship
- 11 Announcements
- 13 Prayer List

## 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](http://parkwayucc.org) | [contact@parkwayucc.org](mailto:contact@parkwayucc.org)

Linda Tossing, *President of the Church Council* [[puccpresident@parkwayucc.org](mailto:puccpresident@parkwayucc.org)]

Kevin Cameron, *Pastor* [[kevin@parkwayucc.org](mailto:kevin@parkwayucc.org)]

Barb Kuhlmann, *Director of Christian Education/Youth* [[barbk@parkwayucc.org](mailto:barbk@parkwayucc.org)]

Barry Luedloff, *Music Director* [[barry@parkwayucc.org](mailto:barry@parkwayucc.org)]

Mona Smith Herberg, *Office Administrator* [[mona@parkwayucc.org](mailto:mona@parkwayucc.org)]

Kathy Ferrell, *Office Assistant* [[kathy@parkwayucc.org](mailto:kathy@parkwayucc.org)]

John Dwyer, *Treasurer* [[treasurer@parkwayucc.org](mailto:treasurer@parkwayucc.org)]

Dawn Friedmann, *Bookkeeper* [[dawn@parkwayucc.org](mailto:dawn@parkwayucc.org)]

Julie Connors, *Nursery* [[juliestl1992@yahoo.com](mailto:juliestl1992@yahoo.com)]

Emma Pennycuick, *Nursery* [[epennycuick1@live.maryville.edu](mailto:epennycuick1@live.maryville.edu)]

Joyce Ruiz, *Alzheimer's Assn Faith Outreach Ambassador* [[JoyceRuiz7@gmail.com](mailto:JoyceRuiz7@gmail.com)]

Polly Rutherford, *Environmental Justice/Sustainability Seekers* [[pollyrutherford@gmail.com](mailto: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.

**Today's flowers** are given by Doug and Amy Yakel.

**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 all our media. Bulletin and eNews deadline is noon Monday.

**All word and service music reprint** permission covered under CLLI License #2464265.

## Anniversaries

12/22 OWENS, Pamela & Grant Doty (32)

12/23 CAMERON, Kevin & Carmen Bumgarner (26)

## Birthdays

12/19 BOWMAN, Cale

12/21 DETJEN, Val

12/19 SIMONSON, Julie

12/21 FAUSS, Donna

12/19 YESS, Kirstin

12/21 WAITE, Laura

12/20 MOHL, Peggy

12/22 RACE, Rich

12/20 STOLZE, Cherie

12/22 WADDELL, Cole

12/20 YAKEL, Alison

12/24 SCHARF, Ingrid

12/21 DAVIDSON, Lisa

12/25 FAUSS, Roger

# 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent: *Love*

Sunday, December 19, 2021 | 10:00am | Sanctuary & Facebook Live

**Meditation** *Love binds all hearts in a soft silken symphony. Seen through the eyes of Love, all beings are beautiful; all deeds are dedicated. And all thoughts are innocent. The World is one vast kin. ~Atharva Veda*

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

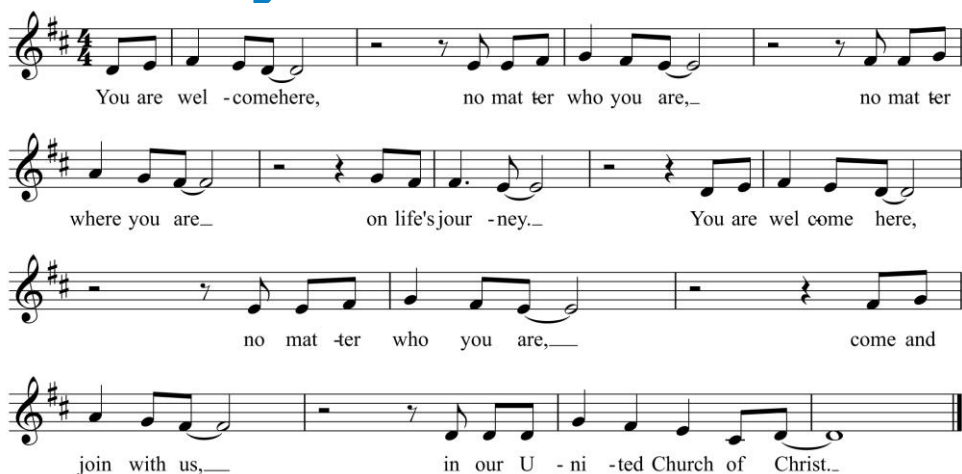
## Passing the Love of Christ

“May the love of Christ be with you.”

**Piano Prelude** Dexter Cameron

## Lighting of the Candles & Ringing of the Bell

**Welcome Song** *You Are Welcome Here*



You are wel - come here, no mat - ter who you are, no mat - ter  
where you are on life's jour - ney, You are wel come here,  
no mat - ter who you are, come and  
join with us, in our U - ni - ted Church of Christ.

## Gathering at the Advent Wreath: Love

**Hebrew Bible Lesson** Isaiah 43, selected verses

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.’

## New Testament Lesson 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

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.

### \*Call to Worship

One: As we come to find love, share love and multiply love, we listen to more scripture...

**Many: 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.**

One: Jesus said, "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."

**Many: Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a fattened ox and hatred with it.**

One: 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.

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

One: 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."

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

One: Let all that you do be done in love. Let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

**All: Let us worship our God together—Creator, Christ and Spirit.**

## \*Response *Love Before Us*



## \*Opening Prayer *Maren Tirabassi*

Holy One, we light four candles and are willing to light every taper in our lives, for love asks for all that is needed—and then some. This is how incarnation happens, how God comes. We light four candles or a hundred or a thousand more—whatever it takes to remind ourselves to live in love. As ordinary and gentle as the holy welcome that turns the world upside down, comes hope, peace, joy, and love to illuminate our Advent. Amen.

**Children's Time** Children are invited to stay with us in worship this morning.

## **Blessing the Children** *Be Near Me, Lord Jesus*

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.

## **The Christmas Story** *Luke 2:1-20*

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them...

...And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about...”

...So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

## **Response** *All is Well*—Michael W Smith | Performed by Josie Duke

All is well all is well  
Angels and men rejoice  
For tonight darkness fell  
Into the dawn of love's light  
Sing Ale  
Sing Alleluia  
All is well all is well  
Let there be peace on earth  
Christ's come go and tell  
That He is in the manger  
Sing Ale  
Sing Alleluia

All is well all is well  
Lift up your voices and sing  
Born is now Emmanuel  
Born is our Lord and Savior  
Sing Alleluia  
Sing Alleluia  
All is well  
Born is now Emmanuel  
Born is our Lord and Savior  
Sing Alleluia  
Sing Alleluia  
All is well

## **The Christmas Story** Matthew 2:1-12

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: “But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

## Call to Prayer *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* v 1, 3



1. Love di - vine, all loves ex - cel - ling, Joy of heaven, to
2. Breathe, O breathe Thy lov - ing Spir - it In - to ev - ery
3. Come, Al - might - y to de - liv - er, Let us all Thy
4. Fin - ish, then, Thy new cre - a - tion; Pure and spot - less



earth come down, Fix in us Thy hum - ble dwell - ing,  
trou - bled breast! Let us all in Thee in - her - it,  
life re - ceive; Sud - den - ly re - turn, and nev - er,  
let us be; Let us see Thy great sal - va - tion



All Thy faith - ful mer - cies crown! Je - sus, Thou art all com -  
Let us find the prom - ised rest; Take a - way the love of  
Nev - er - more Thy tem - ples leave. Thee we would be al - ways  
Per - fect - ly re - stored in Thee; Changed from glo - ry in - to



pas - sion, Pure, un - bound - ed love Thou art; Vis - it us with  
sin - ning; Al - pha and O - me - ga be; End of faith, as  
bless - ing, Serve Thee as Thy hosts a - bove; Pray, and praise Thee  
glo - ry, Till in heaven we take our place, Till we cast our



Thy sal - va - tion, En - ter ev - ery trem - bling heart.  
its be - gin - ning, Set our hearts at lib - er - ty.  
with - out ceas - ing, Glo - ry in Thy per - fect love.  
crowns be - fore Thee, Lost in won - der, love, and praise.

# 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.]

## Song *People, Look East*

1. Peo - ple, look east. The time is near Of the crown-ing of the  
year. Make your house fair as you are a - ble, Trim the  
Peo-ple, look east and sing to - day:  
hearth and set the ta - ble. Peo-ple, look east:  
Love the guest is on the way.

## Mission Moment 2<sup>nd</sup> Mile Advent Lana Biondo

**Circle of Concern** | Emmaus Homes | The Christmas Fund

## Offering Our Gifts to God

## Offering Interlude Zoe Lyons

### \*Response

Praise God for gifts of hope and peace  
Praise God for gifts of joy and love  
Praise God for sending Christ to dwell  
On earth for us—Emmanuel. Amen.

## **\*Prayer of Dedication** based on *We Are Called*

Holy One, you invite us to live in the light and to shine with your joy and love. We are called to be light for all. We are called to act with justice. We are called to love tenderly. We are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with you and all of creation. Come! Open our hearts! Show your mercy to all. We are called to be hope for the hopeless, so all hatred and blindness will be no more! Help us to listen and to sing a new song—to sing of that great day when all will be one! Help us to walk with each other as sisters and brothers united in love! Amen.

## **\*Song of Parting** *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.

## **\*Benediction**

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

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

## If God is Love, Don't Be A Jerk\*\*

Join us this winter as we invite ALL PUCCers to engage with our friend John Pavlovitz and others who find him to be challenging and inspiring.

Secure a copy of his newest book, *If God is Love*, through your fave book distributor or pick one up from church for \$15 (checks to PUCC with JPav Book in the memo) starting on December 19.

We will give you access to 6 pre-recorded videos from John, one each week, beginning the week of January 9. You can watch it whenever you can.

We will come together in-person at church for Live Zooms with John and others each week on Wednesdays at 7pm CT beginning on January 19. Links and recordings will be available if you do not attend in-person.

We will come together again for a special live closing message on Saturday, February 26 at 8pm CT in the Heritage Room - or you can do it from home.

Questions? Please contact [kevin@parkwayucc.org](mailto:kevin@parkwayucc.org); 314-872-9330

\*\* More about the book....

Imagine for a moment what the world might look like if we as people of faith, morality, and conscience actually aspired to this mantra.

What if we worked to create a world that was more loving and equitable than when we arrived?

What if we invited one another to share in wide-open, fearless, spiritual communities truly marked by compassion and interdependence?

What if we daily challenged ourselves to live a faith that simply made us better humans?

John Pavlovitz explores how we can embody this kinder kind of spirituality where we humbly examine our belief system to understand how it might compel us to act in less-than-loving ways toward others.

This simple phrase, "Thou Shalt Not Be Horrible," could help us practice what we preach by creating a world where:

- \* spiritual community provides a sense of belonging where all people are received as we are;
- \* the most important question we ask of a religious belief is not Is it true? but rather, is it helpful?
- \* it is morally impossible to pledge complete allegiance to both Jesus and America simultaneously;
- \* the way we treat others is the most tangible and meaningful expression of our belief system.

In *If God Is Love, Don't Be a Jerk*, John Pavlovitz examines the bedrock ideas of our religion: the existence of hell, the utility of prayer, the way we treat LGBTQ people, the value of anger, and other doctrines to help all of us take a good, honest look at how the beliefs we hold can shape our relationships with God and our fellow humans—and to make sure that love has the last, loudest word.

# Announcements

## Come Christmas Caroling with us!

Friday, December 24 from 10am-12pm

Santa hats, jingle bells and holiday attire welcomed! Please bring a mask.

Christmas Eve morning we will walk a neighborhood and sing secular songs – Deck the Halls; Frosty; Here Comes Santa Claus; Holly Jolly Christmas; Jingle Bell Rock; Jingle Bells; Rudolph; Santa Claus is Coming to Town; Up on the Housetop; We Wish You A Merry Christmas; and Let It Snow). Dress for the weather, bring your water bottle and print song book for reference:

**<https://bit.ly/caroling-songbook>**

PUCCEr Angela Lamb and daughter Alexa is coordinating this opportunity. Gather outside her mother-in-law's home -- 6253 Westminster Pl, St Louis 63130. (The neighborhood association knows we are coming and they welcome us!)

Please contact Angela (314-604-6797; [info@artisticsoup.com](mailto:info@artisticsoup.com)) to RSVP for practice or if you have any questions.

Sing! Share the Spirit of the season!

## Christmas Eve Worship Services Friday, December 24

**4:30pm Family Friendly Worship**—A lively and spirited service with Nativity scriptures, carols and contemporary reflections. We will sing *Silent Night* by candlelight as we prepare to go out into this holy night.

**7:30pm Candlelight & Communion**—This traditional service includes the Christmas Gospel, choir and carols as we ponder what this love story means for us today. We will share Communion at our open table and sing *Silent Night* by candlelight.

## Reminder from The Stews

Six shopping days 'til Christmas. Twelve pledging days until 2022. It's not too late to complete a pledge card but please don't delay! Pledge online from our website: <https://parkwayucc.org/giving/pledge/> **OR** Pledge cards are available in the Gathering Space. Mail your pledge card to the church office, place in the basket in the Gathering Space, or email it.

## Tuesday Evening Dialogue

2nd & 4th Tuesdays | 6:45pm Fellowship | 7:00pm book discussion | via ZOOM

We've wrapped our book discussions for the year. We're excited to announce an all-church read in January of John Pavlovitz's book entitled *If God is Love Don't be a Jerk: Finding a Faith that Makes Us Better Humans*. This new book is described as a passionate plea for Christians to return to a faith of love and service. "The measure of faith should be whether it makes people kinder and more compassionate, not is it true or real or provable or noble - but is it helpful? Is its net effect on humanity redemptive?"

# Prayer List

as of Wednesday, December 15, 2021

## Celebrations

**All the acts of kindness, justice and equity near and far.  
Advent gifts of hope, peace, joy and love!**

## Concerns

**Conrad Damsgaard** - back at MO-Bap -- soon back to REACH Rehab?  
**Steve and Andrea Barnes** - preparing for surgery on his elbows and wrists due to nerve damage from sarcoidosis and as his mother undergoes treatment for cancer.

**Grieving families at the Holidays** - including Albers, Larson, Nolte, Nourse, Peek, Smith, Sperry, Stappenbeck, Wandless, Wessel.

**Marv Herpel** - healing after back surgery at Delmar Gardens, Chstrfld. The family of **Keri Manor** - grieving husband and 4 sons (McKenzie).

**Scott Schmidt** - paralysis after serious fall while hiking; some progress.

**Lizzie** - awaiting liver transplant (niece of Barb Kuhlmann).

**People amidst grief & cleanup from deadly storms over wknd.**

**All impacted by Covid-19** - individuals, families, healthcare workers; If anyone needs help getting vax/booster or if anyone vaccinated would like to be on the Care Team, please reach out to [kevin@parkwayucc.org](mailto:kevin@parkwayucc.org)

**Carl Hudson** - local educator in ICU at Mercy Hospital with Covid.

## Continuing

**Sally Boughman, Lana Biondo, George Lestina, Jim and Polly Winkelmann** - healing and strengthening at home.

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

**Natalie Dixon Crewell** - endured round 1 of leukemia chemo (Lyons).

**Tom McKenzie's brother and sister** - healing and hope.

**Avery** - due 1/6 born 10/17 - doing well in the NICU (Borgmann).

**Pat & Janet** - he is post-radiation/chemo (Skip Larson's son-in-law)

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

**Bob** - continues to struggle with Parkinson's.

**Christopher, Gail & Bill Haack** - chronic health challenges... Bill has begun the lengthy prep process for extensive back surgery in early summer - approximate recovery time will be one year.

**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.

## 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]

**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]

**John Nourse** *The Village at Cape Albeon*; 3300 Lake Bend Dr, #103; Valley Park, MO 63088 [birthdate: October 26]

**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]

**Dick Witte** - Meramec Bluffs Assisted Living; 40 Meramec Trails Dr; Apt #104; Ballwin, MO 63021; 636-368-7324 [birthdate: March 25]

## 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.**

**Caregivers of all shapes and sizes.**

**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.

**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... Peace and Justice** near and far.

## St Louis Association UCC Covenant Partner

*Week ending December 19* - **Mount Tabor UCC**, St. Louis; mounttaborucc.org

*Week ending December 26* - **Calvary UCC**, St. Louis; calvaryucc.org

## Thank You

**Many thanks to all those who donated** wonderful gifts for our adopted family including three little boys and a single unemployed mother. She received over \$400 in gift cards plus many gifts, toys, and clothes for the boys. We send her prayers to find a suitable job in the new year.

A special hug to Laura Waite who designed the sign-up genie which made it so easy to donate. The campaign was so successful we have to adopt more families next year.

Blessing to all in the holiday season. ~Carol Cobb

**I would like to thank Parkway** for the incredible care and concern shown to me and our family during my knee replacement. Phone calls, flowers, meals, prayers...they really do make a difference in the healing process. I am thankful and blessed to be part of this wonderful community. ~Sue Moellering

**Much gratefulness for all** who sent cards, flowers, messages of love and care during my recent surgeries and hospitalizations. Your kind thoughtfulness bolstered me through a rough season. I feel great as I continue to recover. I am in the PUCC office on Wednesdays and would love to say “hi” if you drop by. (Remember to wear your mask!) ~Mona Herberg

---

When God saw the world falling to ruin because of fear, God immediately acted to call it back to God’s self with love.

-Peter Chrysologus

Love waits behind the silence of prayers for my yes to a deepening capacity to love. Every love informs a greater love. Every lesser love is a forerunner of the great Love, sensed but never seen, to whom Mary once said yes.

-Suzanne Guthrie

Jesus says we have to love and recognize the divine image even in our enemies (see Matthew 5:44). He teaches what many leaders, spiritual and otherwise, could never demand of their followers: love of the enemy. Logically that makes no sense. Yet soulfully it makes absolute sense, because in terms of the soul, it really is all or nothing. Either we see the divine image in all created things, or we end up not seeing it very well at all. There is a first epiphany, and gradually the circle keeps moving outward, widening its embrace.

The Christian vision is that the whole world is a sacred temple. If that is true, then our enemies are sacred, too. Who else created them but God? The ability to respect the outsider is probably the litmus test of true seeing. And it doesn’t stop with human beings and enemies and the “least of these.” It moves to frogs and water and weeds. Everything becomes enchanting once we have full sight. One God, one world, one truth, one suffering, and one love (see Ephesians 4:4–6). All we can do is participate and enjoy. I love to ask Christians—why would anyone be afraid of that?

-Richard Rohr

There are places where the warmth of a memory can outweigh the pain of disappearance. -unknown

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 19, 2021

Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)

### *Moving with Mary's Song Christmas Fund Offering*

Today, many churches will receive the Christmas Fund, which The Pension Boards of the United Church of Christ uses to help church pastors and their families in times of need.

Listen to this story from Rev. Cathy Barker, who was 14 years old when her father, a local church pastor, passed away in November 1968. As she describes in a video on the Pension Boards website ([pbucc.org](http://pbucc.org)), the Christmas Fund brought hope in that difficult first Christmas. She shares: "Mom and I had a conversation about how Christmas was going to be very humble. So, we were facing a very lonely time. Then, in the mail, came a check from the United Church of Christ... That check meant so much to us, that the wider church remembered us.

We didn't know who we were anymore in the church. We weren't the minister's family. We were so adrift. But the national church knew about us, and knew that we had a sad Christmas before us. So that check meant the world to us, and it was a much better Christmas than we had thought it might be; it was because of the Christmas Fund entirely because of that experience of being known and remembered by the national church, I felt even more connected to the denomination and to our local church.

When the pandemic hit and the world screeched to a halt for a while in March of 2020, and churches were thrown into total disarray, pretty early on I received a letter asking for additional contributions to the emergency fund... As you might imagine, I got out my checkbook and wrote a check right away. I know what it's like to feel lost and abandoned and confused. And I know what it feels like to receive a gift that makes a huge difference and I want to be a part of that.

It had such a powerful effect on my mom and me, especially that very first year, I want to be part of that feeling and that graciousness for others... it's one of the ways the world goes 'round, isn't it, and one of the ways the Holy Spirit moves among us, that we multiply grace upon grace and help each other out? I want to be part of that."

You can be a part of the Christmas Fund, too, by designating a gift to your local church, or giving online at [pbucc.org](http://pbucc.org).

