



**WHO  
IS THIS  
CHILD?**



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

Sunday, December 26, 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.** If you are with us virtually, 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 Lynn and Mark Sableman in honor of their parents.

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## Anniversaries

12/27 DARLAND, Nancy & Bill (66)

12/27 TUPPER, Tom & Leslie (41)

12/28 HAACK, Bill & Gail (43)

12/29 YESS, Gregory & Kari (32)

## Birthdays

12/27 GRAYHECK, Karen

12/30 ROGERS, Gerry

12/28 LYONS, Zoe

1/01 LUEDLOFF, Barry

12/28 ZOLLER, Robert

# 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas

Sunday, December 26, 2021 | 10:00am | Sanctuary & Facebook Live

## Lighting of the Candles & Ringing of the Bell

### Gathering Songs

*O Come, All Ye Faithful #41, v1-3*

**O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant**

**O come ye, o come ye to Bethlehem**

**Come and behold Him, born the King of Angels**

Refrain: **O come, let us adore Him...O come, let us adore Him**

**O come, let us adore Him...Christ the Lord.**

**Yea Lord we greet Thee, Born this happy morning,**

**Jesus, to Thee all glory given;**

**Word of the Father, Now in flesh appearing!... O come, let us...**

**Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation!**

**Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!**

**Glory to God, all glory in the highest!... O come, let us...**

*Angels, from the Realms of Glory #22, v1-2*

**Angels, from the realms of glory, wing you flight o'er all the earth;**

**Ye who sang creation's story now proclaim Messiah's birth:**

Refrain: **Come and worship, come and worship,**

**Worship Christ the newborn King!**

**Shepherds in the fields abiding, watching o'er your flocks by night,**

**God with us is now residing, Yonder shines the infant light....**

*The First Nowell #56, v1-2*

**The first Nowell the angel did say**

**Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;**

**In fields where they lay a-keeping their sheep,**

**On a cold winter's night that was so deep.**

Refrain: **Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Born is the King of Israel.**

**They look-ed up and saw a star shining in the east beyond them far,**

**And to the earth it gave great light so it continued both day & night.**

*Go, Tell it On the Mountain #29, v1-3*

Refrain: **Go tell it on the mountain over the hills and everywhere**

**Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!**

**While shepherd kept their watching O'er silent flocks by night,**

**Behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light...**

**The shepherds feared and trembled when lo! Above the earth,**

**Rang out the angel chorus That hailed our Savior's birth...**

**Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,**

**And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn...**

## Meditation

*God's power is love, not coercion, exclusion or violence. God changes the world by living in our midst and inviting us to care for the lost, lonely and forgotten, for that is where we will find this little child.*

~Bruce Epperly

## 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.)

## Song

*Joy to the World! #40*

**Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare Him room,  
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,  
And heaven and heaven and nature sing.**

**Joy to the world! The savior reigns. Let us our songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

## Scripture

Psalm 96 (CEB – Common English Bible)

Sing to the Lord a new song! Sing to the Lord, all the earth! Sing to the Lord!  
Bless God's name! Share the news of this saving work every single day!

Declare God's glory among the nations; declare these wondrous works among all people because the Lord is great and so worthy of praise. God is awesome beyond all other gods because all the gods of the nations are just idols, but it is the Lord who created heaven!

Greatness and grandeur are in front of God's strength and beauty are in this sanctuary.

Give to the Lord, all families of the nations—give to the Lord glory and power! Give to the Lord the glory due! Bring gifts! Enter God's courtyards! Bow down to the Lord in holy splendor! Tremble before God, all the earth!

Tell the nations, "The Lord rules! Yes, God has set the world firmly in place; it won't be shaken. God will judge all people fairly."

Let heaven celebrate! Let the earth rejoice! Let the sea and everything in it roar!

Let the countryside and everything in it celebrate! Then all the trees of the forest too will shout out joyfully before the Lord because of this coming!

God is coming to establish justice on the earth! God will establish justice in the world rightly. He will establish justice among all people fairly.

## Gathering at the Advent Wreath: Christ Child



## \*Call to Worship

One:	God didn't come into the world in the ways that many people had hoped—with brute force, commanding things to be different.
Many:	<b>Instead, God comes as an infant child—all vulnerable and needy.</b>
One:	So we learn the lesson of tenderness, service and compassion as we understand the ways of God.
Many:	<b>We have been given the gift of hope - and now we find words and actions to multiply hope in the world.</b>
One:	We have been given the gift of peace - and now we find words and actions to multiply peace in the world.
Many:	<b>We have been given the gift of joy - and now we find words and actions to multiply joy in the world.</b>
One:	We have been given the gift of love - and now we find words and actions to multiply love in the world.
Many:	<b>We stretch and grow now with this Christ Child as we listen to him and catch his vision for how things can be.</b>
One:	We watch Jesus as he spends time with others; performs miracles; nurtures community and expands our understandings of the Holy Spirit.
All:	<b>Let us worship our God together—Creator, Christ and Spirit.</b>

## \*Song *What Child is This?* #53, v1-2

**What Child is this, who laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?**

**Whom angels greet with anthems sweet**

**While shepherds watch are keeping?**

Refrain: **This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing; haste haste to bring Him laud the Babe, Son of Mary**

**So bring Him incense, gold & myrrh; Come one and all to own Him.**

**The King of kings salvation brings; Let loving hearts enthrone Him.**

## \*Opening Prayer based on words by Howard Thurman

**Holy One, the Christmas story is still fresh. We are right here in it.**

**As the twelve days of Christmas begin to add up and we start taking down the decorations, when the song of the angels is stilled, when**

**the star in the sky is gone, when the kings and princes are home,**

**when the shepherds are back with their flock, the work of**

**Christmas begins: to find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the**

**hungry, to release the prisoner, to rebuild the nations, to bring**

**peace among others, to make music in the heart. Help us, O God, as**

**we make plans for this important work. Amen.**

## **\*Response** *Angels We Have Heard on High, #23, v1-2*

Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply Echoing their joyous strains.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds shy this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song?  
Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.

## **Children's Time**

### **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 Sacrament of Baptism**

### **Invitation, Questions and Promises**

Child: Lillian Rose Dwyer

Parents: Jeffrey Dwyer and Lea Kauling

Godparents: Allison Kauling, Michael Dwyer, Eric Nathan Brady

### **Congregation**

One: Jesus Christ calls us to offer the gift of grace in baptism. Do you, who witness and celebrate this sacrament, promise your love, support and care to Lilly, Lea and Jeff as they all live and grow in Christ?

**All: We promise our love, support, and care!**

### **Act of Baptism and Baptismal Prayer**

### **The Right Hand of Fellowship and Gifts from the Church**

## **Response** *I Was There to Hear Your Borning Cry*

I was there to hear your borning cry, I'll be there when you are old.  
I rejoiced the day you were baptized, to see your life unfold.

I was there when you were but a child, with a faith to suit you well;  
I'll be there in case you wander off and find where demons dwell.

When you found the wonder of the Word, I was there to cheer you on;  
You were raised to praise the Living God, to whom you now belong.

Should you find someone to share your time  
and you join your hearts as one,  
I'll be there to make your verses rhyme from dusk till rising sun.

In the middle ages of your life not too old, no longer young,  
I'll be there to guide you through the night, Complete what I've begun.

When the evening gently closes in and you shut your weary eyes,  
I'll be there as I have always been with just one more surprise.

I was there to hear your borning cry, I'll be there when you are old.  
I rejoiced the day you were baptized, to see your life unfold.

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## Scripture Luke 2:41-52 (NRSV – New Revised Standard Version)

Now every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in God's house?" But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

## Moment of Silent Reflection

### Sermon

### Call to Prayer *The Baby in a Manger Stall #2098, v1-2, 4-5*



1. The ba - by in a man - ger stall is
2. We can - not keep the Sav - ior there, for
3. As God's own per - son here on earth, Christ
4. The Car - pen - ter of Gal - i - lee must
5. So glad - ly let us sing and pray since
6. Glo - ry to God in depth and height! Al -



God In - car - nate for us all, as God, true God, the  
Christ is meant for ev - ery - where, not just for shep - herds'  
came to show us hu - man worth, so Je - sus can - not  
leave his shop and home, as he takes up the mis - sion  
Christ is born for us each day, and Christ is risen with  
le - lu - ia! from dawn through night! All space and time in





on - ly One, is born on earth as Mar - y's Son.  
watch - ful eyes, nor for a wise man's val - ued prize.  
stay a child, de - pen - dent, gen - tle, meek, and mild.  
and the pain of life and death and life a - gain!  
God to reign. Let earth re - peat the glad re - frain.  
Christ re - joice, in praise to God, a sin - gle voice!

## Prayers of the People and 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.**

## Mission Moment 2<sup>nd</sup> Mile Advent/Christmas

Circle of Concern | Emmaus Homes | The Christmas Fund

## Offering Our Gifts to God

### Offering Interlude *Joseph's Song*—Michael Card

How could it be this baby in my arms sleeping now, so peacefully  
The Son of God, the angel said. How could it be?

Lord, I know He's not my own, not of my flesh, not of my bone  
Still O God let this baby be son of my love

O God show me where I fit into this plan of yours  
How can a man be father to the Son of God  
Lord for all my life, I've been a simple carpenter  
How can I raise a king? How can I raise a king?

He looks so small, His face and hands so fair and when He cries the sun just  
seems to disappear  
But when He laughs it shines again. How could it be?

O God show me where I fit into this plan of yours  
How can a man be father to the Son of God  
Lord for all my life, I've been a simple carpenter  
How can I raise a king? How can I raise a king?

How could it be this baby in my arms sleeping now, so peacefully  
The Son of God, the angel said. How could it be?

## \*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

Holy One, we continue to ponder what is happening with the birth of Jesus. You have been born into the world with us so you can walk a mile in our moccasins - and so that we can feel more connected and filled with you. As we hear the angels sing and the shepherds tell their story, we too have a responsibility to tell your love story through the words we use and the actions we take. Guide us. Amen.


## \*Song of Parting *Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow #50*

*Unison*



1. There's a star in the East on Christ - mas morn,  
2. If you take good heed to the an - gel's words,

*Harmony* *Unison*




Rise up, shep-herd, and fol - low, It will lead to the place where the  
Rise up, shep-herd, and fol - low, You'll for - get your flocks, you'll for -

*Harmony*



Christ was born, Rise up, shep-herd, and fol - low.  
get your herds, Rise up, shep-herd, and fol - low.

*Refrain*



Fol - low, fol - low, Rise up, shep-herd, and fol - low,



Fol-low the Star of Beth-le - hem, Rise up, shep-herd, and fol-low.

## \*Benediction

## \*God's Light Goes Forth

## \*Music for Going Forth

## Christmas Poem

Andrew Pratt

Human child of human mother,  
see the Christ has come to birth,  
demonstrating now in living  
every person's human worth.  
God has chosen, in this moment,  
such a messy, mucky start,  
choosing risky, earthly living,  
God immersed in human art.

Mary holds the God of heaven,  
Joseph marvels at his child,  
then imagination wonders,  
fears are running free and wild.  
Certainly a new beginning,  
for these youngsters, for the world,  
all, as yet, is veiled, in waiting  
for God's grace to be unfurled.

So we wait, we know the story,  
lose the sense of shock and awe,  
heard each year the well-worn carols,  
that we sang in years before.  
But for now a new song beckons,  
asks that we might join the scene  
watch the couple hold the Godhead,  
guessing what this gift might mean.

## Christmas Cry

J Burklo

A baby cries...  
and its cry commands our attention.  
What does it need, how can we provide?

Dear One!

It's you!  
We hear your cry...  
Feed the hungry, hold the hurting, shelter the shivering,  
Stay close to the suffering

Dear One!

To your Christmas cry,  
we answer yes.

## **Intertwine Interfaith Welcome Circle (IIWC)**

**WE NEED YOUR HELP** - to welcome an Afghan family as new Americans!

Nearly 40,000 Afghans are currently being housed on American Army bases. The Army can only house these families until mid-February. Consequently, the US Department of State issued a call to action to expand the United States' capacity to welcome these families and help them begin their new lives as Americans.

Congregation Shaare Emeth (CSE), Parkway United Church of Christ (PUCC) and Turkish American Society of Missouri (TASOM) have committed to answer this call.

*Intertwine Interfaith* is launching an emergency initiative through the Welcome Circle program with the *Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society* (HIAS) which was founded in 1881 and has settled more than 4.5 million refugees over the years. Our Welcome Circle has committed to supporting the resettlement of an Afghani family in St. Louis. Together, Intertwine Interfaith Welcome Circle (IIWC) must raise a total of \$27,750 which will cover essential needs such as housing, clothing, food, utilities, etc. for the first six months in St. Louis.

The IIWC Core Team is made up of reps from each faith community. The Core Team will have direct contact with the Afghani family and will help enroll kids in school and help the parents learn the fundamentals of food shopping, transportation, language skills, banking in St. Louis and more. We will also need the participation of everyone in our communities for indirect support, furniture donations, apartment set-up, resource identification, and other activities.

### **Contributions are needed no later than January 17, 2022 –**

MLK Jr. Day. All contributions are tax deductible and 100% of your donation will go toward the needs of the family. Please make your contribution either by sending a check made payable to *We Believe Inc* to 16535 Baxter Forest Ridge Drive; Chesterfield, MO 63005

We are grateful to *We Believe Inc*, a 501(c) 3 non-profit corporation, for their help collecting the funding for IIWC. *We Believe* was created by Stan Shanker (CSE), one of our IIWC founders, a few years ago in an effort to spread kindness, hope, and positivity while raising money to support social justice issues. Two other IIWC Founders, Lisa Mason (PUCC) and Engin Blackstone (TASOM), serve on the *We Believe* Board.

Thank you for considering being a part of this important work.

Your Interfaith Intertwine Team: Kevin Cameron, Lisa Mason, Paige Penico, Ali Durhan, Engin Blackstone, Stan Shanker and Debbie Bram

## 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 favorite book distributor or pick one up from church for \$15 (checks to PUCC with JPav Book in the memo).

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 for six Wednesdays at 7:00pm CT beginning on January 19 and ending on February 23. (Links and recordings will be available if needed.)

We'll come together again for a special live closing message on Saturday, February 26, 8:00pm 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.



# Prayer List

as of Wednesday, December 22, 2021

## Celebrations

**Lilly Dwyer and parents Lea and Jeff** - at her Baptism this Sunday!

**Avery** - due 1/6 born 10/17 – HOME from the NICU (Borgmann)!

**Natalie Dixon Crewell** - endured round 1 of leukemia chemo; now home in Gainesville MO; back-and-forth to StL for tx over next months.

**Brad Lyons (Zoe, Summer, Blake) and Courtney Richards** celebrating her move to St. Louis this week.

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

**Advent gifts of hope, peace, joy and love!**

## Concerns

**Conrad Damsgaard** - doing well in the hospital; was about to be discharged to rehab but tested positive for Covid - now on Covid floor.

**Marv Herpel** - just returned to Brookdale after hospitalization and 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 and has a toe amputated on December 23

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

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

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

**Mike Guthrie and Mary Guthrie** - as Mike is ill (Stifel).

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

**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)

**Family/Friends of Carl Hudson** - asst principal at Marquette High and Manchester Councilman who died from Covid complications last wk.

## 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.

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

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

**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

*Week ending January 2* - **Bethany-Peace UCC**, St Louis; see Facebook page

December 26, 2021

Luke 2:41-52

## **Who is This Child?**

Today's scripture reading gives us a short glimpse into the life of the boy Jesus, at the moment that he ceases being a child and begins to be a young adult. His parents, after a frantic search, discover him in the temple in a sort of self-directed impromptu confirmation class of one - a class in which he is both student and teacher.

By beautiful happenstance, this day also begins the celebration of Kwanzaa, a day for teaching and learning. The Rev. Calvin Jones of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago tells the story of this holiday\* which was introduced in 1966 as a celebration of people of African descent in the United States.

While Kwanzaa is not religious, its values of anti-consumerism, strong families, and cultural tradition resonate strongly with our Christmas celebrations in the progressive church. Each day of Kwanzaa is marked by a principle, which is named both in Swahili and English. Why do you think these principles are important markers for those of African descent? Whether you celebrate Kwanzaa or not, how might these principles inform and enrich your understanding of the Christ story?

**December 26: Umoja or Unity**

**December 27: Kujichagulia or Self-Determination**

**December 28: Ujima or Collective Work and Responsibility**

**December 29: Ujamaa or Cooperative Economics**

**December 30: Nia or Purpose**

**December 31: Kuumba or Creativity**

**January 1: Imani or Faith**

*\*Learn more about Kwanzaa in this stirring video from Rev. Calvin Jones at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNPhdf9b4k>.*

