



*Christmas  
Eve*  
2021



www.parkwayucc.org  
Friday, December 24, 2021

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- p.8 7:30pm Worship

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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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2841 North Ballas Road | St. Louis, MO 63131 | 314-872-9330 [p] | 314-872-9014 [f]  
parkwayucc.org | contact@parkwayucc.org

- Linda Tossing, *President of the Church Council* [puccpresident@parkwayucc.org]
- Kevin Cameron, *Pastor* [kevin@parkwayucc.org]
- Barb Kuhlmann, *Director of Christian Education/Youth* [barbk@parkwayucc.org]
- Barry Luedloff, *Music Director* [barry@parkwayucc.org]
- Mona Smith Herberg, *Office Administrator* [mona@parkwayucc.org]
- Kathy Ferrell, *Office Assistant* [kathy@parkwayucc.org]
- John Dwyer, *Treasurer* [treasurer@parkwayucc.org]
- Dawn Friedmann, *Bookkeeper* [dawn@parkwayucc.org]
- Julie Connors, *Nursery* [juliestl1992@yahoo.com]
- Emma Pennycuick, *Nursery* [epennycuick1@live.maryville.edu]
- Joyce Ruiz, *Alzheimer’s Assn Faith Outreach Ambassador* [JoyceRuiz7@gmail.com]
- Polly Rutherford, *Environmental Justice/Sustainability Seekers* [pollyrutherford@gmail.com]
- John Nourse, *Pastor Emeritus*



# Christmas Eve 2021

Friday, December 24, 2021 | 4:30pm | Sanctuary & Facebook Live

## Meditation

*Foreshadow and stow the light; grow and follow the light; bestow, glow and rainbow the light; throw and overflow with light...the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ~PUCC 2021*

## Lighting the Candles & Ringing the Bell

**Prelude** *Away in a Manger Medley* arr. by Fred Boch

1<sup>st</sup> Tune—J. E. Spilman

2<sup>nd</sup> Tune—John R. Murray

Lullaby—Johannes Brahms

## Gathering Songs

*It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*

**It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,  
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:  
“Peace on the earth, good will to all,  
from heaven’s all-gracious King.”**

**The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.**

*Angels We Have Heard on High*

**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.**

*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing!*

**Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the new-born King!  
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and people reconciled.”  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies;  
With angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem.”  
Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the new-born King!**

## Greeting

## Sharing Hope, Peace, Joy & Love

## Gathering at the Advent Wreath: The Christ Candle

**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. The prophet Jeremiah said, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

**Many: We have found peace and it calms us. Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”**

One: We have found joy and it bubbles up inside of us. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.”

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

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. Jesus is the Light of the World.**

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

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

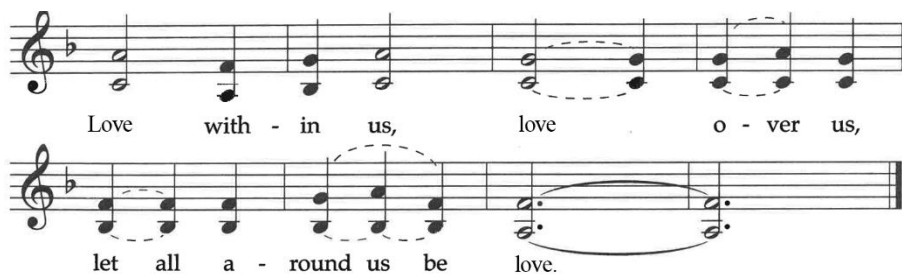
**All: We commit to being these gifts to others. The Spirit moves us toward one another. Let us worship our God together—Creator, Christ and Spirit.**

## **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** *Love Before Us*

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 3/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the response: "Love be - fore us, love be - hind us,". The second staff contains the melody for the second line: "love un - der our feet." The lyrics are written below the notes. The melody is simple and uses a mix of quarter and eighth notes.



## 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 *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 Message

Luke 2:1-4

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.

**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

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.

**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

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be delivered to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.”

**The First Noel, the Angels did say  
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay  
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep  
On a cold winter’s night that was so deep  
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel. Born is the King of Israel!**

Luke 2:12-14

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!”

**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

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, just as it had been told to them.

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

## **Invitation to Prayer**

### **Prayers of the People & Lord’s Prayer**

**Our [Creator/Mother/Father/Holy One] who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

[A variety of names for God are welcome here—including in the Lord’s Prayer.]

**Mission Moment** 2<sup>nd</sup> Mile Advent/Christmas  
Emmaus Homes | Circle of Concern | The Christmas Fund

## **Invitation to Generosity**

**Offertory** *Mary, Did You Know?* by Mark Lowry and Buddy Greene  
Cassie Rosenberger, flute

### **\*Prayer of Dedication**

**Holy One, we also come bearing gifts. We are people of hope, peace, joy and love – so help us to discover old and new ways of sharing these blessings with the people we know – and with the people we don’t know yet. Amen.**

### **\*Sharing the Light of Christ**

#### **\*Congregational Carol** *Silent Night/Stille Nacht*

Duet with guitar, sung in German by Aidan McCarter and Barry Luedloff  
[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 and Becoming Light**

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

*Improvisational Postlude on “Antioch” (Joy to the World)*

***Please depart through the Sanctuary exit up front on the left.***

***Take the candle home with you as a reminder of the light that shines in the darkness.***



# Christmas Eve 2021

Friday, December 24, 2021 | 7:30pm | Sanctuary & Facebook Live

**Meditation** *Love distant, love detached; and strangely without weight was with me in the night, when everyone had gone; and the garland of pure light stayed on, stayed on. ~Mary Sarton*

## Gathering Music

### Lighting the Candles & Ringing the Bell

#### Carols

*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

**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**

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

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

*It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*

**It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,  
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:**

**“Peace on the earth, good will to all,**

**from heaven’s all-gracious King.”**

**The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.**

*Angels We Have Heard on High*

**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.**

*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing!*

**Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the new-born King!**

**Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and people reconciled.”**

**Joyful, all ye nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies;**

**With th’ angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem.”**

**Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the new-born King!**

## Gathering at the Advent Wreath: The Christ Candle

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**Many: We have found peace and it calms us. Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”**

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

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### **Response** *Love Before Us*

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 3/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the response: "Love be - fore us, love be - hind us,". The second staff contains the melody for the second line: "love un - der our feet." The lyrics are written below the notes. The melody is simple and uses a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb).

Love with - in us, love o - ver us,  
let all a - round us be love.

## Children's Message

### **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.

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

Emmaus Homes | Circle of Concern | The Christmas Fund

## Invitation to Generosity

### **Choir Anthem** *When I Kneel at the Manger Tonight*

### **Prayer of Dedication**

Holy One, we also come bearing gifts. We are people of hope, peace, joy and love—so help us to discover old and new ways of sharing these blessings with the people we know—and with the people we don't know yet. Amen.

### **Carol** *O Little Town of Bethlehem #44*

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.

For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above,  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering  
love.

O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth!  
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven.  
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive Him, still the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;  
Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today  
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Emmanuel!

## **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.

## **Christmas Gospel** Luke 2:1-20

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. He 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.

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. 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!”

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. But 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.

## **Carol** *What Child is This?* #53

**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, the Son of Mary!**

**Why lies He in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.**

**So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh;  
Come, one and all, to own Him.  
The King of kings salvation brings; Let loving hearts enthrone Him.**

## **Moment of Silent Reflection**

### **Sermon**

### **Invitation to the Communion Table**

We celebrate an "open table." All are invited to participate! There's plenty of room at this table.

### **Pastoral Prayer & 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.]

#### **Sharing the Presence of Christ**

**Communion Interlude** *Mary, Did You Know?* Cassie Rosenberger, flute

#### **\*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**

**\*Congregational Carol** *Silent Night/Stille Nacht*

[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**

Go now in peace to bring light to those in darkness, joy to those who can find none, hope to a world steeped in realism. Go with the songs of angels in your ears, and the love of God in your hearts. Go and spread the word—the babe of Bethlehem is born for all. Things will not be the same! Amen.

***Merry Christmas!***

**\*Postlude** Improvisational Postlude on “Antioch” (*Joy to the World*)

***Please depart through the Sanctuary exit up front on the left.***

***Take the candle home with you as a reminder of the light that  
shines in the darkness.***

***Blessings to you!***

***Feel the gifts of hope, peace, joy and love. Let them flow  
through you to others in the words you use and the actions  
you take.***

## **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 PUCers 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 PUC 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.

