





www.parkwayucc.org

Sunday, July 3, 2022

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Limitless Love | Courageous Action | Spirited Inquiry

Purpose Statement

Parkway United Church of Christ strives to be an inclusive community embracing: spiritual nourishment, open-minded inquiry, courageous action, and interfaith partnerships to fulfill God's calling to create a just world for all.

Congregational Statement

Parkway United Church of Christ, with God's grace, seeks to be a congregation that includes all persons, regardless of race, ethnic, or socio-economic background while respecting differences of gender, marital status, age, sexual orientation, and mental and physical ability. We aspire to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God. We invite all to share in the life and leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities and blessings of participation in our open and affirming congregation.

PARKWAY UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST

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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.

Today's scripture reader: Kathleen Tarr from Ohio.

Today's flowers: Polly and Mike Rutherford celebrating their 49th Wedding Anniversary.

Bell Rung During Lord's Prayer. A tradition begun when farmers working in surrounding fields would stop work and join in prayer.

Subscribe to our email lists: Text your email address to 22828 or sign up at www.parkwayucc.org

Communications Requests: Please use the form at www.parkwayucc.org/communications for all announcements for all our media. Bulletin and eNews deadline is noon Monday.

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Mental Health Support

24/7 Crisis Hotline 800-273-8255 (TALK)

988 (new nationwide 3-digit number similar to 911)

800-SUICIDE: 800-784-2433

24/7 Missouri Department of Mental Health 800-811-4760

Text 741741 and someone will text right back... www.crisistextline.org

Behavioral Health Network of Greater St Louis 314-449-6713

Anniversaries

7/6 ENGEL, Gayle & Donna (54)

Birthdays

7/4 SIMS, Gladys

7/8 HOUSER, Sue

7/6 HENKE, Kai

7/8 MASON, Ian

7/7 SCHOWALTER, T.J.

7/8 SIEBER, Jack

7/7 WOLFF, Quin

7/9 BOWMAN, Jeremy

7/8 COBB, Harold

4th Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday, July 3, 2022 | 10:00am | Sanctuary & Facebook Live

Meditation *We remember, O God, that the worst happened. But here we are. By grace and grit, we're not done yet. Pass the bread, good Jesus; pour the wine.* ~Mary Luti

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 *O Beautiful for Spacious Skies*—Hugh S. Livingston, Jr.
Based on *Materna* by Samuel A. Ward

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.

Scripture Psalm 27 (CEB – Common English Bible)

The Lord is my light and my salvation. Should I fear anyone? The Lord is a fortress protecting my life. Should I be frightened of anything? When evildoers come at me trying to eat me up—it's they, my foes and my enemies, who stumble and fall! If an army camps against me, my heart won't be afraid.

If war comes up against me, I will continue to trust in this:

I have asked one thing from the Lord—it's all I seek: to live in the LORD's house all the days of my life, seeing the Lord's beauty and constantly adoring the temple. Because God will shelter me in God's own dwelling during troubling times; God will hide me in a secret place in God's own tent; God will set me up high, safe on a rock. Now my head is higher than the enemies surrounding me, and I will offer sacrifices in God's tent—sacrifices with shouts of joy! I will sing and praise the Lord. Lord listen to my voice when I cry out—have mercy on me and answer me! Come, my heart says, seek God's face.

Lord, I do seek your face! Please don't hide it from me! Don't push your servant aside angrily—you have been my help! God who saves me, don't neglect me! Don't leave me all alone! Even if my father and mother left me all alone, the Lord would take me in. Lord, teach me your way; because of my opponents, lead me on a good path. Don't give me over to the desires of my enemies, because false witnesses and violent accusers have taken their stand against me. But I have sure faith that I will experience the Lord's goodness in the land of the living! Hope in the Lord! Be strong! Let your heart take courage! Hope in the Lord!

*Call to Worship

One:	Come to be immersed in the love of God.
Many:	We don't just want to hear about God. We also want to experience God.
One:	Come to feel the peace of Christ.
Many:	We don't just want to sing about Jesus. We also want to experience Jesus.
One:	Come to know the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit.
Many:	We don't just want to pray about the Spirit. We also want to experience the Spirit.
All:	Let us worship our God together—Creator, Christ and Spirit.

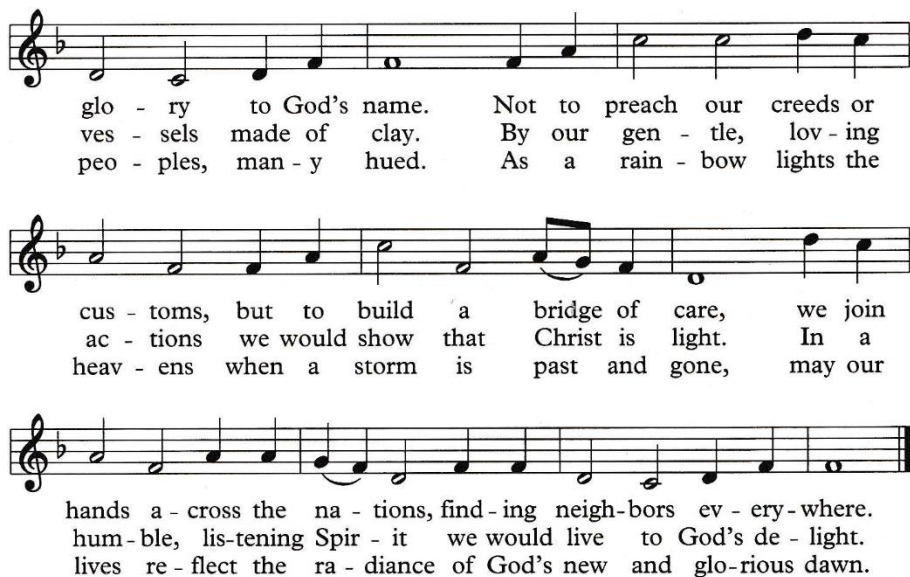
*Song *As a Fire is Meant for Burning* #2237



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 hues. 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

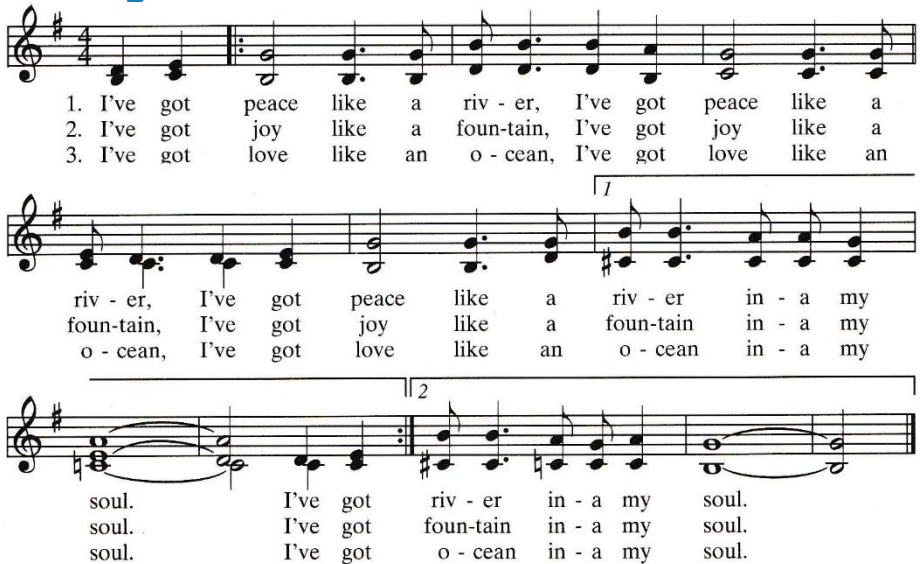
We come, God of the Journey, a people from different places, different histories, different lifestyles. We come hoping to find companionship for the journey, solidarity for the struggle. We gather, God of Hospitality, around your welcome table, a table not yet round, but rounding. We gather seeking to become a round-table people, welcoming of all, with no preferred seating, no firsts and no lasts... and no corners for anyone. We yearn, God of the Rainbow, for a new way of living and relating... as neighbors not strangers, as siblings not 'them and us'. We yearn to live fully - celebrating both the diversity of our human family, and the unity of our call to love and justice. We hunger, God of Abundant Life, for lives that have meaning and integrity, and for relationships grounded in mutuality and respect. We thirst for places to bring our doubts, our fears; places to express honestly who we are. We thirst for hope and encouragement as we struggle to follow Jesus in the ways of life-risking love. With the gift of your grace we are nourished. With the promise of your presence may we be strengthened to be faithful. 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.

Blessing the Children *I've Got Peace Like a River*



1. I've got peace like a riv - er, I've got peace like a
 2. I've got joy like a foun-tain, I've got joy like a
 3. I've got love like an o - cean, I've got love like an

riv - er, I've got peace like a riv - er in - a my
 foun-tain, I've got joy like a foun-tain in - a my
 o - cean, I've got love like an o - cean in - a my

soul. I've got riv - er in - a my soul.
 soul. I've got foun-tain in - a my soul.
 soul. I've got o - cean in - a my soul.

Offering Our Gifts to God

If you have an offering today, please place it in the plate on the communion table before the end of the closing hymn. There are also offering plates in the Gathering Space just outside the sanctuary. Thank you for your generosity.

Offertory *Break Now the Bread of Life*

Words by Mary A. Lathbury and Alexander Groves (alt. BKL), music by Stan Petheh, based on Bread of Life by William F. Sherwin

Break now the bread of life, Dear God, to me,
 As you did break the loaves beside the sea;
 Beyond the sacred page, I seek you God.
 My spirit longs for you, O Living Word.

Bless now the truth, dear God, teach it to me,
 As you did bless the bread by Galilee;
 Then will all bondage cease, all fetters fall;
 And I will find my peace, my all in all.

You are the Bread of Life, O God, to me,
 Your Holy Word the truth that helps guide me;
 Give me to eat and live with You above;
 Teach me to love that truth, for You are love.

Break now the bread of life.

*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**

Holy One, we recognize that we are meant to give and receive gifts. Help us to find balance. Be in us as we find old and new ways to be generous. Heighten our senses so we can perceive when and where we are needed most. Amen.

Scripture Luke 10:1-11 (NRSV – New Revised Standard Version)

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into this harvest. Go on your way; I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house!’ And if a person of peace is there, your peace will rest on that person, but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.’”

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.

Call to Prayer *We Come to This Table* KREMSER 12.11.12.12 (*We Gather Together*)

We come to this table, O God, with thanksgiving.

We lift up our hearts, we remember, we pray.

We hear Jesus' welcome — inviting, forgiving;

We know your Spirit's peace as we feast here today.

We dine at your table as sisters and brothers,

Diverse in our cultures, yet nourished as one.

The bread and the cup that we share here with others

Are gifts uniting all who are claimed by your Son.

We grieve for your world here; we cry, "How much longer?"

We pray for the cycles of violence to cease.

Yet here, in Christ broken, we're fed and made stronger

To labor in his name for a world filled with peace.

We rise from this table with new dedication

To feed the world's children, to free the oppressed,

To clear out the minefields, to care for creation;

We pray, O God of peace, that our work will be blest.

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.]

*Breaking Bread & Pouring Wine/Juice

*Prayer of Thanksgiving

Holy One, we thank you for this simple and sacred meal. May it infuse us with the tenderness, strength, radical love, deep spirit, keen wisdom and joyful ways of Jesus himself. With this nurture and your nudges, send us out to be your voice and actions. Amen.

*Song of Parting *Will You Come and Follow Me?*



1 "Will you come and fol - low me if I but call your name?
2 "Will you leave your-self be-hind if I but call your name?
3 "Will you let the blind - ed see if I but call your name?
4 "Will you love the 'you' you hide if I but call your name?
5 Lord, your sum-mons ech - oes true when you but call my name.



Will you go where you don't know and nev - er be the same?
Will you care for cruel and kind and nev - er be the same?
Will you set the pris - oners free and nev - er be the same?
Will you quell the fear in - side and nev - er be the same?
Let me turn and fol - low you and nev - er be the same.



Will you let my love be shown; will you let my name be known;
Will you risk the hos - tile stare should your life at - tract or scare?
Will you kiss the lep - er clean, and do such as this un - seen,
Will you use the faith you've found to re-shape the world a - round,
In your com - pa - ny I'll go where your love and foot-steps show.



will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?"
Will you let me an - swer prayer in you and you in me?"
and ad - mit to what I mean in you and you in me?"
through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?"
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

***Benediction**

***God's Light Goes Forth**

***Music for Going Forth** *Jubilant Gigue*—Iouri Grichetchkine (2016)

Announcements

Speaker Series: My Journey to Sobriety by Chris P.

Sunday, July 10 | 11:15am in the Heritage Room and on Zoom

Our speaker will offer a unique, authentic, and faithful perspective on alcoholism through the prism of hope and grace, anger, love, and prayer.

We all know someone, who has a substance abuse disease, and their struggle for recovery. This program is a must towards better understanding the grip of addiction and the hope of treatment.

Naomi Runtz in Photography Gallery

Long time Parkway UCC member, Naomi Runtz, will be included in *Return to the Opera*—an exhibition by The Sharp Shooters Photography Collective at the Union Avenue Christian Church, 733 Union Blvd, St. Louis. For those attending the operas, the gallery will be open during the performances.

An Opening Reception for the artists will be on SUNDAY, JULY 10 FROM 12:30 TO 3:00 P.M. Parking is behind the church.

Annie Malone Program at Tappmeyer Homestead

Sunday, July 10 | Tappmeyer Homestead, 2 Barnes West Drive, Millennium Park (behind Barnes-Jewish West Hospital)

Annie Malone was a trail-blazing pioneer in business and philanthropy in the early 1900s when women of color were not acknowledged by the leaders of our community or country. Linda Nance, Founding President of the Annie Malone Historical Society, will talk about Annie's life and accomplishments at Tappmeyer Homestead, 2 Barnes West Drive, Millennium Park, on Sunday, July 10 at 2 p.m. Following a career in law enforcement, Linda served on the Webster Groves Board of Education and co-founded A Call to Conscience, an interactive theatre group working for social change. Currently working on advanced degrees in museum studies and educational practice, Linda is also Missouri's historian for the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs. An exhibit on Annie is open noon to 4 p.m. July 10 and 24 at Tappmeyer.

Reservations are necessary for Linda's presentation. Email TappmeyerHomestead@gmail.com

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

School is out, many supplies are used up, and children will be taller by the end of summer. Let's help school children be ready for next fall. Parkway UCC is asked to provide 300 2-pocket folders for the Isaiah 58 Back-to-School event on July 30. Underwear and socks for any ages, small children through adult sizes would be most appreciated. We are also invited to host a game, activity booth, or resource table.

Isaiah 58 serves our neighbors in the Choteau, Jefferson, Cherokee, and S. Kingshighway boundaries. As you are able, please consider donating 2-pocket folders, socks, and underwear and place in the designated box in the church lobby by July 29. Contact Evelyn Buretta: burettaevelyn@gmail.com

Unleashing Potential's STEM Enrichment Summer Program

Church of the Master UCC, 1325 Paddock Drive, Florissant, MO 63033

Unleashing Potential, a ministry supported by Parkway UCC's extra-mile giving, offers a range of summer programs for area students. There are still openings for the Middle School STEM Enrichment Camp, a 5-day-a-week, full-day camp for current 6th and 7th graders who want to explore through creative play, design thinking, and innovation. Registration is \$50/week. Added bonus: PUCC's Summer Lyons is one of the camp counselors and is happy to answer questions; call or text 314.315.1218 for more information.

Feeding Hungry Kids

Saturday, July 9 | 2-hr shifts 8:00am – 5:00pm | Lutheran Church of the Atonement - 1285 North New Florissant Road Florissant, MO 63031

Thousands of children around the world die each day from starvation or spoiled food. Feed My Starving Children's mission is "as a Christian non-profit organization, Feed My Starving Children is called to feed God's starving children hungry in body and spirit."

Five local area churches are organizing an event to pack over 160,000 meals in one day. They need lots of volunteers that are willing to help. Feed My Starving Children has tackled world hunger since 1987 by sending volunteer packed nutritious meals to 70 countries. These meals are specifically designed to reverse and prevent malnutrition and are used in schools, orphanages, clinics and feeding programs to break the cycle of poverty.

FMSC's goal is "to reach everyone until ALL are fed". With God's help and your hands we will work to end hunger.

Due to the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, many more children are at risk of starvation.

Register for a 2 hour shift between 8am-5pm here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/fmsc-north-county-mobile-pack-tickets-321046487687>

Shifts are 8-10am; 11am-1pm; 2-4pm. Let us know when you sign up so we can let others know. It would be good to organize a PUCC carpool.

Parkway Habitat Work Day Saturday, September 10 | 7:45am – 3:00pm

We have filled the four positions but alternates are welcome to sign up. Parkway has been assigned a work date for this year. Parkway will be allowed 4 workers for Saturday, September 10. Contact Tom McKenzie: mckenzie1947@att.net. Please consider donating to Habitat. Checks for our UCC Build should be made out to UCC HABITAT BUILD and sent to Tim Weaver c/o Samuel UCC, 320 N. Forsyth Blvd, Clayton 63105.

CROP WALK 2022

Sunday, October 2 | 4:30 – 9:00pm | Eden Seminary 475 E Lockwood Ave, Webster, Groves MO 63119

The 2022 CROP HUNGER WALK will be a hybrid event., For those who feel safe gathering in person to walk together, we shall gather on on Sunday, October 2 at Eden Seminary, 475 LockWood Ave, in Webster Groves, Missouri. Check in is 430PM and Walk at 5:00PM. The walk will be followed by a Crop Concert in Wehrli Chapel at 7:00PM However, participants may also register for the walk and choose to walk wherever and whenever they want want, individually or in small groups. For more details and to register, raise fund and/or donate:

<https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2022/event/saintlouismo>

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

Sue Moellering (susieqslp@sbcglobal.net) and Pam Manning

(pmanning5078@gmail.com), Crop WalkTeam

The “Declaration of Interdependence”

As we celebrate our American Declaration of Independence (signed in 1776), we also affirm our fundamental Interdependence with fellow citizens of our community, our country and the planet. The first Declaration of Interdependence was written by Will Durant in 1944, and since then there have been many versions offered by different people and organizations.

We share this affirmation from Melanie Bacon:

We hold these truths to be self-evident:

That all life is interconnected, and endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights and responsibilities,

That among these are presence, compassion, and the pursuit of happiness.

That to secure these rights and responsibilities,

We open our minds and hearts to the needs of others, and our own true needs,

We hear the sound of the living universe in our ears, and add our voices to the song,

We live every moment with awareness of the purity and power of existence.

And for the support of this Declaration, we pledge to each other our love and our breath,

For the freedom of the one is the freedom of the all, and the pain of the one is the pain of the all;

The breath of the one is the breath of the all, and the breath of the all is the breath of God.



OPPORTUNITIES TO LIVE IN COVENANT

Our Open and Affirming congregation can help change the world!

Being an ONA Congregation isn't just about welcoming lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender seekers into a congregation. An Open and Affirming Covenant is a living commitment to speak out as a partner and ally to the concerns of LGBTQIA+ people, and enabling faith communities to put their faith into action by advocating in their wider community. This might include issues --

- for LGBT youth in your community, especially in public and charter schools where they face cyber bullying, verbal abuse, and physical assault.
- for eliminating harmful practices such as Conversion Therapy, especially for youth and young adults.
- for basic civil rights. Marriage was legalized for all people by the Supreme Court in 2015. However, some are concerned that there are people who would like to roll back that right and others.
- for LGBT seniors who aren't safe in their nursing and retirement homes, and who need the support of a church family.
- for transgender citizens who face discrimination in employment and housing, and whose basic medical needs aren't covered by health insurance.
- for LGBT refugees and asylum seekers who face persecution and imprisonment at home ... or worse.
- for the millions affected by HIV worldwide who are denied the treatment and medicines they need to live.

Your ONA congregation can make a difference—in your community, in your state, and beyond. Every small step you take towards justice and human rights brings us closer to the reign of God in which everyone is wanted, everyone is welcome, no one is left behind. Use these resources to open windows to new possibilities for ministry and mission for your church, and contact the Coalition if you need support!

Open and Affirming Coalition of the United Church of Christ

(216) 736-3228; office@openandaffirming.org; ona@openandaffirming.org

Prayer List

as of Wednesday, June 29, 2022

Celebrations

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

Brayden Michael Comens - born to Megan and David!

US Independence Day

Alison Yakel - passed the NCLEX and has accepted a job at Seattle Children's Hospital as part of their RN Residency Program and will be working in the cancer care unit. She moves by mid-July.

Concerns

Jim Winkelmann - at DePaul Rehab Hospital after a stroke last week.

Grieving and giving thanks for Barb Kuhlmann -

<https://conta.cc/3QqJkQJ> ; Memorial Service here 3pm on Sat, July 30.

Naomi Runtz and family - as they remember Joe.

Bill and Pat Owens - as Bill seeks healing after recent back surgery.

Bart Coleman - prep has begun for a heart procedure later this month.

Marv Herpel - healing & gaining strength back home at Brookdale.

Joan Biest - chemotherapy treatments were successful; radiation next.

Josh - acute leukemia... he is very critical right now (Kathleen Tarr).

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

The war in Ukraine.

Women's Justice issues.

The people of Afghanistan after recent deadly earthquake.

Continuing

Jackie - special needs adult battling Parkinson's, cancer, and dementia.

Dusty & Lindsay; Matt & Kim - expecting babies with complications.

Sharon - struggling with many health issues (Gerry Rogers' cousin).

The Haack's neighbor - stage 4 cancer... single parent of a 2.5 yr old.

Sydney Palmgren - terminal cancer; mother of 2 yo (Becca's sister).

Janet Schoedinger - chemotherapy for 3rd cancer battle (Litzinger).

Lynda Ruby - living with cancer (Lindner).

Val - strength and patience (Jim Winkelmann's 101 year-old mother).

Christopher, Gail & Bill Haack - chronic health challenges.

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

Ruth Peace & Pinky Wilcoxon - PUCC sisters with health challenges.

Bill Darland - ongoing health issues.

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

Anthony - multiple challenges as he lives his post-incarceration life.

Gary - risky behaviors; seeking balance and stability.

Intertwine Interfaith Welcome Circle - Afghan family in St Louis.

St Louis Association UCC Covenant Partner

Week ending July 3 - **Parkway UCC**, St Louis; parkwayucc.org

Week ending July 10 - **Pilgrim Congregational UCC**, St. Louis;

pilgrimucc-stl.org

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]

Glady Sims - *Friendship Village - 15200 Village View Dr, #2418*; Chesterfield, MO 63017; 636-898-8873 [birthdate: July 4]

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

Lucia McKenzie and John Bieg - engaged to be married.

The Shelton Family - as Killian prepares to welcome a baby sister.

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.

PUCF Family struggling with employment; healthcare costs and limits.

Our Missouri Mid-South Conference and St Louis Assn UCC

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.

Peace and Justice near and far... **US Military** around the globe.

4th Sunday after Pentecost

July 3, 2022

2 Kings 5:1-14

Surprising Prophets

*This is my song, O God of all the nations
A song of peace for lands afar and mine
This is my home, the country where my heart is
Here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine
But other hearts in other lands are beating
With hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.**

Of all the interesting characters we find in the busy book of Kings, Naaman is perhaps the most relatable to modern people. Mostly, his life is pretty good. He is successful at his career. He's well-regarded by his peers. He has enough money to be more or less comfortable. He just has this one irritating problem - a skin ailment that will not leave him be.

When he finds out that a healer in a neighboring country might be able to help him, he's able to wield his influence and power to find a way there. When he reaches the healer's house, he is not welcomed in, as he would have expected after a long journey. Instead, he's instructed by a servant to go bathe in the nearby Jordan River.

Insulted, he stomps off. Again, relatable. You can just imagine him fuming that he had paid the guy, and he didn't even get a meeting. And what kind of river was the Jordan anyway? The rivers in Naaman's own country were much more impressive.

When Naaman decides to fill the healer's frustrating prescription, he is cured of more than his physical ailment. Perhaps even more importantly, he is relieved of his prideful nationalism, the belief that they do things best back where he's from.

Today is the day before American Independence Day, and many of us will raise our voices in songs of praise for our own nation's majesty and beauty. Today might also be a day to turn to page 591 in *The New Century Hymnal*, to give voice to the humility, curiosity, and generosity that is the path to knowing, like Naaman, that unthinking nationalism is never going to be what heals. What heals is curiosity and respect for all people.

**Stone, Lloyd. "This is my song." The Hymnal © 1933, The New Century Hymnal © 1993, p. 591*