





www.parkwayucc.org  
Sunday, September 4, 2022

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## Contents

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

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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 work and join in prayer.

**Subscribe to our email lists:** Text your email address to 22828 or sign up at [www.parkwayucc.org](http://www.parkwayucc.org)

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

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## Mental Health Support

988 (new nationwide 3-digit number similar to 911... call or text)

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

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](http://www.crisistextline.org)

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

## Birthdays

9/4 OSBORNE, Thomas

9/7 BOWERMASTER, Kate

9/5 ALLISON, Vivian

9/7 EIFFERT, Jackie

9/5 STAPPENBECK, Julie

9/7 BIEST, Emily

# 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday, September 4, 2022 | 10:00am | Sanctuary & Facebook Live

**Meditation** *Not all transformations are visible.* ~Anonymous

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

## Passing the Peace of Christ

“May the peace of Christ be with you.”

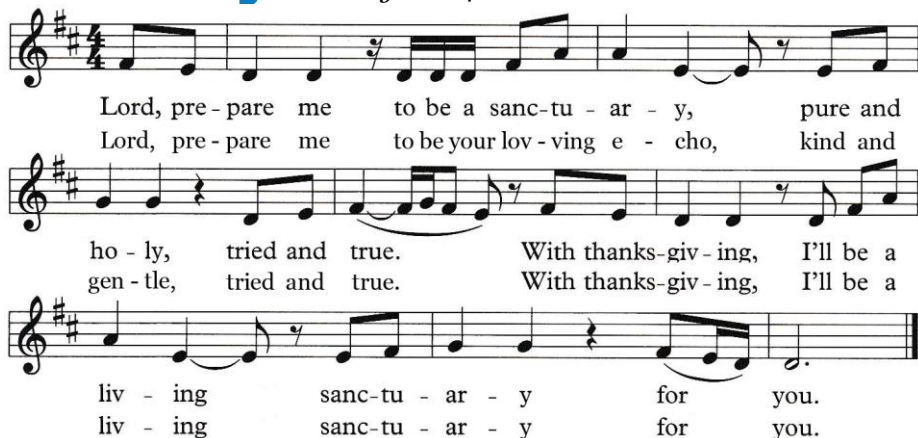
(We are intentional about bringing more peace into the world.)

**Prelude** *O People, Rise and Labor* (Aus meines Herzens Grunde)

Arr. John A. Behnke, setting by Johann Christoph Bach, 1642-1703,  
based on the tune Hamburg, 1598

## Lighting of the Candles & Ringing of the Bell

**Welcome Song** *Sanctuary #2164*



Lord, pre- pare me to be a sanc- tu - ar - y, pure and  
Lord, pre- pare me to be your lov - ving e - cho, kind and  
ho - ly, tried and true. With thanks- giv - ing, I'll be a  
gen - tle, tried and true. With thanks- giv - ing, I'll be a  
liv - ing sanc- tu - ar - y for you.  
liv - ing sanc- tu - ar - y for you.

**Scripture** Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 (CEB – Common English Bible)

Lord, you have examined me. You know me. You know when I sit down and when I stand up. Even from far away, you comprehend my plans. You study my traveling and resting. You are thoroughly familiar with all my ways. There isn't a word on my tongue, Lord, that you don't already know completely. You surround me—front and back. You put your hand on me. That kind of knowledge is too much for me; it's so high above me that I can't reach it.

**\*Call to Worship** Tim Graves

One:	We gather because we are more than individuals.
<b>Many:</b>	<b>We are connected at the cellular level.</b>
One:	We are one people, one species, one planet.

<b>Many:</b>	<b>We are one living organism, learning and <i>being</i> together.</b>
One:	So, of course, we gather together.
<b>Many:</b>	<b>It is in our nature to open our hearts to one another.</b>
<b>All:</b>	<b>Let us worship our God together—Creator, Christ and Spirit.</b>

**\*Song** *You Have Searched Me, Lord, And Known Me*  
NETTLETON 8.7.8.7 D ("Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing")

**You have searched me, Lord, and known me!**

**All my life is in your care.**

**When I lie awake in evening, You are always with me there.**

**When I rise to greet the morning in an attitude of praise,**

**What I learn from you is humbling: You already know my ways.**

**Lord, you know the song I'm singing and my words before I pray.**

**You're behind me and before me as I travel through each day.**

**You once knit me all together; You created me by grace.**

**In your eyes, you see and love me as you treasure all my days.**

**Lord, I try to learn your wisdom, but I cannot understand.**

**Yet your love is all around me; I am part of all you've planned.**

**Let me sing your praise each morning, let me serve you all day**

**through,**

**And in evening, make me peaceful, knowing this: I'm loved by you!**

Biblical Reference: Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

Tune: John Wyeth's *Repository of Sacred Music*, 1813 (*Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*)

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## **\*Opening Prayer**

**Holy One, we come here eager. We are eager to let go of the things that hold us down and keep us fearful. We are eager to sing, pray and remember times when we were safe, embraced, sturdy. We are eager to be honest with you, ourselves and one another. Guide us, O God, into places where our faith can be expressed and where it can grow deeper and wider. 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 *Where Children Belong* #2233



This, this is where chil-dren be-long, wel-comed as part of the



wor - ship - ing thron-g. Wa - ter, God's Word, bread and



cup, prayer, and song: This is where chil-dren be - long.

## 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.

## Offering Interlude

*Ours Is a Singing Faith!*—Arthur Frackenpohl/Jane Parker Huber  
Sung by 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Choir

Ours is a singing faith! Now hear the hymns we raise,  
Resounding, strong, the years along, and echoing our praise.  
Ours is a singing faith! In confidence we sing:  
Creation's throne is God's alone, so joyous voices ring.

Ours is a singing faith! Through all the ebb and flow,  
Of youth and age, on history's page we see saints come and go.  
Ours is a singing faith! The melody rolls on,  
Sustained by those whose voices rose in praise in times long gone.

Ours is a singing faith! Upheld by work and prayer,  
That justice, peace, and hope not cease but flourish everywhere.  
Ours is a singing faith! Though grief or pain hold sway,  
Christ still shall dwell, Emmanuel! God with us all the way.

Ours is a singing faith! All thanks to God be sung  
By people here both far and near in every land and tongue.  
Ours is a singing faith! Let psalms and anthems rise  
From sun and moon and stars in tune till music fills the skies!

## \*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** Carol Penner

**Holy One, you know our innermost beings. Connect our hearts with our pockets. Be the pacemaker which fills our lives with the steady rhythm of generosity, our pockets opening and closing in love. Even after a lifetime, they'll still be filled with grace, pressed down, shaken together, and overflowing. That's a treasure worth sharing. Amen.**

**Hebrew Scripture** Jeremiah 18:1-6 (CEB – Common English Bible)  
Jeremiah received the Lord's word: Go down to the potter's house, and I'll give you instructions about what to do there. So I went down to the potter's house; he was working on the potter's wheel. But the piece he was making was flawed while still in his hands, so the potter started on another, as seemed best to him. Then the Lord's word came to me: 'House of Israel, can't I deal with you like this potter, declares the Lord? Like clay in the potter's hand, so are you in mine, house of Israel!'

**Gospel Lesson** Luke 14:25-33 (CEB – Common English Bible)

Large crowds were traveling with Jesus. Turning to them, he said, "Whoever comes to me and doesn't hate father and mother, spouse and children, and brothers and sisters—yes, even one's own life—cannot be my disciple. Whoever doesn't carry their own cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

"If one of you wanted to build a tower, wouldn't you first sit down and calculate the cost, to determine whether you have enough money to complete it? Otherwise, when you have laid the foundation but couldn't finish the tower, all who see it will begin to belittle you. They will say, 'Here's the person who began construction and couldn't complete it!' Or what king would go to war against another king without first sitting down to consider whether his ten thousand soldiers could go up against the twenty thousand coming against him? And if he didn't think he could win, he would send a representative to discuss terms of peace while his enemy was still a long way off. In the same way, none of you who are unwilling to give up all of your possessions can be my disciple.

## **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.

## Communion Song *In the Singing #2255*



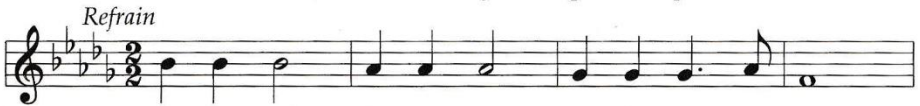
1. In the sing-ing, in the si-lence, in the hands ex-pec-tant,  
2. In the ques-tion, in the an-swer, in the mo-ment of ac -



o - pen, in the bless-ing, in the break-ing,  
cep - tance, in the heart's cry, in the heal-ing,



in the Pres-ence at this ta - ble —  
in the cir - cle of your peo - ple —



Je - sus Christ, Je - sus Christ, be the wine of grace:



Je - sus Christ, Je - sus Christ, be the bread of peace.

## 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.]

### \*Breaking Bread & Pouring Wine/Juice

### \*Prayer of Thanksgiving *Jeff Lukens*

**Holy One, you have put your life into our hands; now we put our lives into yours. Take us, renew and remake us. What we have been is past; what we shall be, through you, still awaits us. Lead us on. Take us with you. Help us to be more like Jesus. Amen.**

### \*Song of Parting *I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me #369*

**I'm gonna live so God can use me, Anywhere, Lord, anytime!  
I'm gonna live so God can use me, Anywhere, Lord, anytime!**



## \*Benediction

## \*God's Light Goes Forth

## \*Music for Going Forth

*Let Us with a Gladsome Mind*—arr. Robert J. Powell (b. 1932)

Based on the tune Monkland (anon. melody, Manchester, 1824)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# Labor Day

## Word Scramble

Labor Day is celebrated in the United States on the first Monday of September. The jumbles here include both historically significant words and ways people celebrate today.

MVNEEOT \_\_\_\_\_

MANPLUL \_\_\_\_\_

AYPTR \_\_\_\_\_

EBESRMTEP \_\_\_\_\_

EWEKEDN \_\_\_\_\_

SWEAG \_\_\_\_\_

TSRGIH \_\_\_\_\_

AYONDM \_\_\_\_\_

DRAET \_\_\_\_\_

TKEIRS \_\_\_\_\_

ABUEERC B \_\_\_\_\_

TFAFIRC \_\_\_\_\_

IOTAVACN \_\_\_\_\_

ILOYAHD \_\_\_\_\_

IRZEAOGN \_\_\_\_\_

CUYTISRE \_\_\_\_\_

LRAYL \_\_\_\_\_

CPCIIN \_\_\_\_\_

RCEGMIU \_\_\_\_\_

BARLO \_\_\_\_\_

ARDPEA \_\_\_\_\_

NNUIO \_\_\_\_\_

RTPI \_\_\_\_\_

OJB \_\_\_\_\_

# Announcements

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: noon Monday.

## Tuesday Afternoon Dialogue September 6

1st & 3rd Tuesdays | 1:45 Fellowship | 2:00pm book discussion | via ZOOM  
We'll be discussing *One Long River of Song: Notes on Wonder*, by Brian Doyle. Borrowing from Amazon: From a "born storyteller" (Seattle Times), this playful and moving bestselling book of essays invites us into the miraculous and transcendent moments of everyday life." And, "Doyle often used his Catholicism to explore the human and natural worlds, but this is perhaps the most generous, universal 'religious writing' you'll ever read."  
Contact Jackie Eiffert: [jeiffert@gmail.com](mailto:jeiffert@gmail.com)

**Video:** [hus02web.zoom.us/j/83670617428?pwd=bUxPZEdDMlU4ay9oNndTWw4yZUYwUT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83670617428?pwd=bUxPZEdDMlU4ay9oNndTWw4yZUYwUT09)  
**Phone:** 312 626 6799 | **Meeting ID:** 836 7061 7428 | **Passcode:** 480007

## Tuesday Evening Dialogue September 13

2nd & 4th Tuesdays | 6:00pm Potluck | 7:00pm Book discussion | Heritage Room  
Our next book selection is *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison. Originally written in 1970 and despite receiving multiple national awards, it was later banned in some school districts. It is the powerful story about a young African-American girl growing up in Ohio during the Great Depression. Racism, beauty vs ugliness, women and femininity, violence, sexuality and home/family are some of the themes brought out in the story.

It is a book of merit with compelling characters in a story that remains topical and timely. Join us as we discuss the first 100 pages of the book on Sept 13.

Contact Helen Race: [raceh@att.net](mailto:raceh@att.net) | 314-401-4382

## AWOL - Adventurous Women Out Late

Sun. Sept 18 12:15pm - lunch nearby after 11:15am Speaker Series  
Sat. Oct. 29 7:30pm - *Discover Hannah Gadsby @ church*  
Sat. Nov. 12 5:30pm- Dinner at J. Gilberts Steaks + shopping at mall  
Fri. Dec 16 6:30pm- Golden Globe nominated movie TBA Thurs.  
Jan 26 matinee at the FOX Theater - *SIX* the musical  
Contact Carmen Bumgarner: [cfbum@charter.net](mailto:cfbum@charter.net) | (314) 330-0813

## Tower Grove Pride

September 24 & 25 | Tower Grove Park | STL, MO | [www.towergrovepride.com](http://www.towergrovepride.com)  
A community-powered independent Pride festival. We are LGBTQ+ centered with a broad mission to support and promote social justice for every disadvantaged, oppressed, or undervalued community.

Featuring many local artists, crafters, small businesses, nonprofits and music. Sponsors, booths and performers signup:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/409044aabad2ba46-tower>

## CROP Walk 2022

Sunday, October 2 | 4:30pm Check-in | 5:00pm Walk  
Eden Seminary, 475 Lockwood Ave, in Webster Groves, Missouri  
5:00pm Crop Concert | Wehrli Chapel

The 2022 CROP HUNGER WALK will be a hybrid event: You may walk in person or register for the walk and choose to walk wherever and whenever you want, individually or in small groups. For 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 and Pam Manning, Crop WalkTeam



**3,800 Volunteers  
Needed To Pack  
1 Million Meals**  
2,750 Kids fed for a year

Sept. 8-11, 2022  
Kennedy Rec Center  
6050 Wells Rd.  
St. Louis, MO 63128

Adults and kids (age 5 and up)  
work together to  
hand-pack FMSC  
MannaPack meals



Packing Shifts are just 2 hours  
and there is no cost to pack!

Every day 10,000 children die  
from hunger related causes

**Our Mission:  
Until ALL Are Fed**

To register or for  
more information go to  
[FeedTheNeedSTL.org](https://FeedTheNeedSTL.org)

## Feed The Need STL



**We CAN do this St. Louis!**

## **Seeking God's Shalom: Reflections on Labor Day** Bruce Epperly

While Labor Day is often regarded as the last chance for a long summer weekend at the beach or with friends—making it one of the "low Sundays" of the church year—might it also offer an opportunity to reflect spiritually on the deeper significance of this national holiday?

The celebration of Labor Day—a day of rest and respect—emerged out of conflict. First celebrated in 1882 by the Central Labor Union in Boston, "Labor Day" became a federal holiday in 1894 in response to the deaths of a number of workers during the Pullman Strike between labor unions and railroads. Sadly, government was pitted against the people as U.S. marshals and military forces were responsible for the deaths of striking workers. In response to this abuse of power, President Grover Cleveland made reconciliation with the labor movement a top national priority.

The labor movement, often in partnership with Christian leaders, went on to become the source of many of the benefits and rights that both blue and white collar employees hold dear today: vacations, holidays, workers compensation, days off, health insurance, disability, and collective bargaining. Although the church was often at the sidelines and even, in some cases, opposed workers' rights, the Social Gospel movement affirmed the intersection of faith and social ethics and played a major role in securing justice for working people.

Labor Day is more than symbolic. It reflects the prophetic concern for justice for the hardworking, poor, and vulnerable. The prophetic writings and the gospel message consistently affirm the rights of laborers and the dispossessed in relationship to wealthy landowners and greedy business people. Economics matters in the biblical tradition. What people eat and where they live is a spiritual as well as economic and political issue. Disparity of income and power is a recurring biblical concern: the widows, landless persons, and unemployed people matter to God. Just as God heard the cries of the oppressed Israelites, God hears the cries of the poor. Jesus' ministry embraced rich and poor alike, but his most controversial acts involved his inclusion of outsiders, people at the margins of the religious, social, and economic worlds, as members of the realm of God, deserving care in this life as well as the next.

With the growing disparity between the wealthy and middle class—not to mention the poor—in the United States, Labor Day is an opportunity for the church to give thanks and recognize the importance of those who stand up for workers, as well as embrace the larger implications of this holiday. This is not merely a matter of class struggle but the recognition of God's Shalom in which property and wealth are ultimately a matter of spiritual stewardship rather than private ownership. The scriptures do not oppose property ownership or wealth, but see them as part of God's care for the whole earth.

Despite the imperfections of governmental agencies, recent calls to disband the Environmental Protection Agency, eliminate regulations related to business practices and the environment, and radically restructure Medicare need to be examined closely in light of worker's concerns by persons who seek to follow Jesus. The earth is God's, the economy is a matter of justice, and care for the vulnerable is a moral and spiritual requirement.

Labor Day, then, offers us a reminder and challenge to affirm the value of work, seek healthy workplace environments, and support opportunities for entrepreneurial adventure in the context of a just social safety net. On Labor Day, we give thanks for those whose efforts have led to workers rights and care for the least of these. And we can make a commitment to seek justice for all workers and balance the need for profitmaking with care for our society's most vulnerable members.

### **Jesus' Parable for Labor Day** Carl Krieg

The story is quite simple, the meaning a bit more obscure. A farmer scans the available day laborers to work in his vineyard, hires a few in the morning, and agrees to pay them a denarius for the day, what a Roman soldier would make. Generous, actually. At 9, then noon, and again at 3, probably recognizing that he needed additional help, he hires more. And finally, just before quitting time, he hires even more help.

At the end of the day, he pays those last hired a denarius, and so too for those hired at 9am, noon, and 3pm. By now, those hired in the morning are expecting a big paycheck, but lo and behold, they too get a denarius. Complaining, they are reminded that they are receiving what was promised. And this, Jesus proclaims enigmatically, is what God is like.

At day labor "markets", the strongest and smartest are picked first, leaving for last the weak, the sick, the elderly, the stranger, who, because of their situations, have become the poorest and most in need of the work. And nobody wants them.

In our society, where automation and technology threaten to put more and more of us at the end of the line, it might prove helpful to turn to Jesus' parable in our striving to determine anew the meaning of labor and reward. Not that his teaching provides the answer, but it does challenge our traditional options and suggests new and different ideas.

# Prayer List

as of Wednesday, August 31, 2022

## Celebrations

**Coree Mix** (he/him/they/them) first came to PUCC as *Diamond Perry* is coming out to the church and finding it their safe place - asking for prayers for guidance and healing as they battle with bulimia.

**New Members** Dana Delibovi, Nancy Litzinger, Coree Mix, Cindy Nouri!

**The Biest Family** as they celebrate Emily's wedding this weekend.

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

## Concerns

**Polly, family/friends of Jim Winkelmann** - grieving/giving thanks; <https://www.kutisfuneralhomes.com/winkelmann-james-allen/>

**Bart Coleman** - healing after successful heart surgery.

**Steve and Andrea Barnes** - home after his recent hospitalization.

**Linda Tossing** - healing from recent knee replacement surgery.

**Gail Haack's brother** - strengthening after hip replacement surgery.

**Friend of Haacks** - surgery 8/31 followed by lengthy recuperation.

**Amy Yakel** - healing from recent knee replacement surgery.

**Cassie Rosenberger** - healing after recent surgery.

**Mary Beth Anderson** - health challenges; apt break-in (Brueggemann)

**Frank Vogel** - starting hospice care due to long term kidney disease.

**Ella** - healing from major back surgery (teen granddaughter of Biondos).

**Patty and mom Estelle** - as Patty receives hospice care (Pleis/Eiffert).

**All impacted by Covid-19**

## Continuing

**Joan Biest** - radiation treatments wrapped up recently.

**Mary Kay McKenzie** - unable to communicate (sister of Tom's sister).

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

**Josh** - receiving chemo; needs a bone marrow transplant (Tarr)

**Sharon** - variety of health challenges (Rogers).

**Sue Linson** - recently diagnosed with leukemia (McKenzie).

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

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

**Janet Schoedinger** - chemotherapy for 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

**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.

## St Louis Association UCC Covenant Partner

Week ending September 4 - **St Lucas UCC**, Sappington; stlucasucc.org

Week ending September 11 - **St. Lukes UCC**, Imperial;

stlukesuccimperial.org

## Home/Care Facility/Rehab Center

**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, #166;

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]

**Naomi Runtz** - 272 N Lindbergh Blvd; StL MO 63141; 34-993-0469

naomiruntz@sbcglobal.net [birthdate: August 30]

**Gladys Sims** - *Friendship Village - 15200 Village View Dr, #2418*;

Chesterfield, MO 63017; 636-898-8873 [birthdate: July 4]

**Pinky Wilcoxen** - 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

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

**Brussee/Dario/Race Family** as Skyler and Justin prep to be parents.

**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.**

**PUCC 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.

# 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

September 4, 2022

Philemon 1:1-21

## ***A New Identity***

As the letter to Philemon begins, the apostle Paul and his friend Timothy are writing a letter to their friends - two men, Philemon and Archippus, and a woman Apphia. Paul invites them to read the letter to the church community that they have gathered in their home. The letter they write is being carried by a freed slave named Onesimus. That's a lot of characters for such a short book!

In fact, this letter is the shortest book in the Bible. If you have never read the whole thing, why not try it now? As you do, try to put yourselves into the shoes of the characters. Imagine what they are thinking, feeling, seeing and hearing as they write, carry, or read this letter. As you imagine, consider if feeling empathy for these or other characters in the Bible can help you feel close to them, or understand them better.

You don't have to limit your imagination to characters on the page. What about people in your family, your region, your congregation, or your nation? How might your life, or your congregation's life, be changed for the better by using this practice of holy empathy?

*Imagine yourself as Paul or Timothy, in prison. As you look around the cell, what can you see, touch, hear, feel? How do you feel about being imprisoned? What are your emotions as you say goodbye to Onesimus? How do you experience God's presence in this place? What is God calling you to do next?*

*Imagine yourself as Onesimus, traveling toward Philemon and his family. As you travel, what can you see, touch, hear, feel? How do you feel about being on the road? What are your emotions as you prepare to deliver this letter? How do you experience God's presence now? What is God calling you to do next?*

*Imagine yourself as Philemon, Archippus, Apphia or a member of the church community gathered in their home. As Onesimus delivers his letter, what can you see, touch, hear, feel? How do you feel about those you are gathered with right now? What are your emotions as you hear the words of your friends Paul and Timothy? How do you experience God's presence in this gathered community? What is God calling your community to do next?*