

*Arise, shine; for your  
light has come, and  
the glory of God has  
risen upon you.*



**PARKWAY**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



www.parkwayucc.org  
Sunday, January 8, 2023

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## Contents

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

## 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]  
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]  
Kim Livengood, *Church Historian* [historian@parkwayucc.org]  
Joyce Ruiz, *Alzheimer’s Assn Faith Outreach Ambassador* [JoyceRuiz7@gmail.com]  
Polly Rutherford, *Environmental Justice/Sustainability Seekers* [pollyrutherford@gmail.com]  
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.

**Scripture Reader:** Polly Winkelmann

**Today's Flowers:** Meera Williams in memory of her father.

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

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**Photos/Videos:** Please be aware that our worship services are video recorded, streamed live on Facebook Live, and made available for later viewing through that service.

Photos should generally not be taken of children in church except as part of organized activities and programs, and any requests of children or their parents or guardians should be respected. Please be respectful of privacy and mindful that this is a safe and sacred space for all who enter.

Media uploads: <https://tinyurl.com/PUCCmedia>

## 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

## Anniversaries

1/10 NOLTE, Bill & Karen (36)

## Birthdays

1/8 HENKE, Pema

1/13 ADKINS, Mary

1/11 BRUEGGEMANN, Kacey

1/14 PEEK, Marsha

1/11 TARR, Kathleen

1/14 PILLAI, Janie

1/12 TOOMBS, Lynn

# Epiphany

Sunday, January 8, 2023 | 10:00am | Sanctuary & Facebook Live

**Meditation** *Love is the only force capable of changing the heart of the human person and of all humanity, by making fruitful the relations between men and women, between rich and poor, between cultures and civilizations.*  
~Pope Benedict XVI

**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** *We Three Kings*—Johm H. Hopkins, Jr., arr. Fred Bock

## Lighting of the Candles & Ringing of the Bell

**Choral Introit** *Shine, O Star!*—Lloyd Larson and Mary Kay Beall

Shine, O star, and illumine our darkness,

Shine, O star, and brighten our day. Shine, O star, and beckon the seeker.

Shine, O star, and lead us on our way.

**Scripture Lesson** Isaiah 60:1-6 (NRSV – New Revised Standard Version)

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

**Welcome Song** *Gathered Here*

**Gathered here in the mystery of this hour.**

**Gathered here in one strong body.**

**Gathered here in the struggle and the power.**

**Spirit draw near. Amen.**

**Gospel Lesson** Matthew 2:1-12 (CEB – Common English Bible)

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the territory of Judea during the rule of King Herod, magi came from the east to Jerusalem. They asked, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We’ve seen his star in the east, and we’ve come to honor him.”



When King Herod heard this, he was troubled, and everyone in Jerusalem was troubled with him. He gathered all the chief priests and the legal experts and asked them where the Christ was to be born. They said, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is what the prophet wrote:

*You, Bethlehem, land of Judah, by no means are you least among the rulers of Judah, because from you will come one who governs, who will shepherd my people Israel.”*

Then Herod secretly called for the magi and found out from them the time when the star had first appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search carefully for the child. When you’ve found him, report to me so that I too may go and honor him.” When they heard the king, they went; and look, the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stood over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. They entered the house and saw the child with Mary his mother. Falling to their knees, they honored him. Then they opened their treasure chests and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Because they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another route.

## \*Call to Worship

One: Upon a midnight clear, Jesus was born. Angels bend near the earth to offer “Peace on earth, good will to all.” Hear the angels sing!

**Many: They come with wonderful wings unfurled; and their heavenly music floats over all the world.**

One: The angels are hovering here. Can you see it? Can you feel it? Across the plains, mountains, valleys and oceans...*Hush.*

**Many: We are alert. We watch. We are listening. The angels are whispering and shouting the love song they bring.**

One: And the wise ones experience it and are drawn here. They follow the star and seek the holy embrace. They come with gifts.

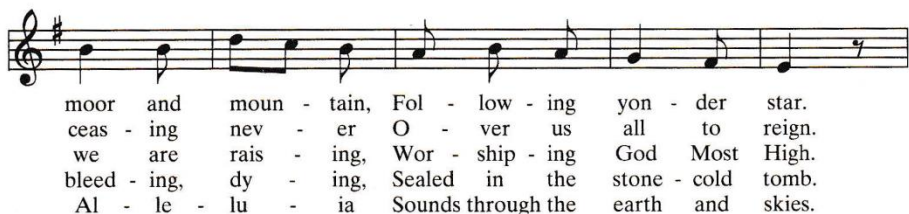
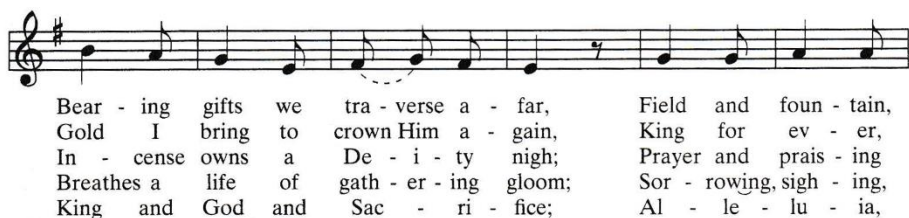
**Many: We come too! We are drawn here. We have gifts to share.**

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

## \*Song #66 We Three Kings of Orient Are



*All:* 1. We three kings of O - ri - ent are,  
*Opt. solo:* 2. Born a King on Beth - le - hem's plain,  
*Opt. solo:* 3. Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I:  
*Opt. solo:* 4. Myrrh is mine; its bit - ter per - fume  
*All:* 5. Glo - rious now be - hold Him a - rise,



## \*Opening Prayer

God of light and love, in this very moment the star still shines.  
 Gather us and let the star call us to new ways of self-awareness,  
 healing and hope, restoration and renewal, as we discover again  
 Christ's call to follow in his ways. 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. Please meet your child/youth in the Gathering Space just outside the Sanctuary after worship - as the teachers will bring them there after class.

## 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.

## Scripture Matthew 2:1-12 (MSG - The Message)

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem village, Judah territory—this was during Herod’s kingship—a band of scholars arrived in Jerusalem from the East. They asked around, “Where can we find and pay homage to the newborn King of the Jews? We observed a star in the eastern sky that signaled his birth. We’re on pilgrimage to worship him.”

When word of their inquiry got to Herod, he was terrified—and not Herod alone, but most of Jerusalem as well. Herod lost no time. He gathered all the high priests and religion scholars in the city together and asked, “Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?”

They told him, “Bethlehem, Judah territory. The prophet Micah wrote it plainly:

It’s you, Bethlehem, in Judah’s land, no longer bringing up the rear.  
From you will come the leader who will shepherd-rule my people, my Israel.”

Herod then arranged a secret meeting with the scholars from the East. Pretending to be as devout as they were, he got them to tell him exactly when the birth-announcement star appeared. Then he told them the prophecy about Bethlehem, and said, “Go find this child. Leave no stone unturned. As soon as you find him, send word and I’ll join you at once in your worship.”

Instructed by the king, they set off. Then the star appeared again, the same star they had seen in the eastern skies. It led them on until it hovered over the place of the child. They could hardly contain themselves: They were in the right place! They had arrived at the right time!

They entered the house and saw the child in the arms of Mary, his mother. Overcome, they kneeled and worshiped him. Then they opened their luggage and presented gifts: gold, frankincense, myrrh.

In a dream, they were warned not to report back to Herod. So they worked out another route, left the territory without being seen, and returned to their own country.

## Response *Still, Still, Still*—arr. Walter Ehret (b.1918)

Based on the traditional Austrian carol melody

**Still, still, still, He sleeps this night so chill!  
The Virgin’s tender arms enfolding,  
Warm and safe the Child are holding.  
Still, still, still, He sleeps this night so chill!**

**Sleep, sleep, sleep, He lies in slumber deep  
While angel hosts from heaven come winging,  
Sweetest songs of joy are singing.  
Sleep, sleep, sleep, He lies in slumber deep.**

## Reflection

## **Scripture** Matthew 2:13-23 (NRSV – New Revised Standard Version)

When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

“A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.”

After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child’s life are dead.”

So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

## **Reflection**

### **Call to Prayer** *O God of Light, May Our Light Shine*

Lyrics by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette

CANONBURY 8.8.8.8 (*Lord, Speak to Me, That I May Speak*)

**O God of light, may our light shine**

**In ways that serve and honor you.**

**May we be loving, just and kind,**

**Proclaiming Christ in all we do.**

**God, where your people are oppressed**

**And where they cry out in despair,**

**Make us your light — to heal, to bless —**

**A witness, Lord, that you are there.**

**Christ, when your way is pushed aside**

**By those who trust in wealth and might,**

**Make us your lamps that we may guide**

**A searching world to your love's light.**

**O Spirit, in this world of doubt,**

**We often sin and drift away;**

**When our own faith is flickering out,**

**Shine on our path and light our way.**



# 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.]

## 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

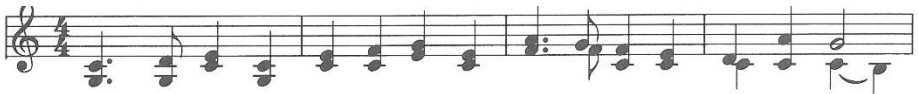
### \*Response

**Praise God the Source of life and birth.  
Praise God the Word, who came to earth.  
Praise God the Spirit, holy flame.  
All glory, honor to God's name! Amen.**

### \*Prayer of Dedication

**Like the Magi who came to offer their gifts to the baby Jesus, we offer our gifts to you, O Compassionate One. May our financial and spiritual gifts become expressions of our love. With these gifts, we give you the best we have to offer. Use them to make your light of compassion and justice shine more brightly in the world. Amen.**

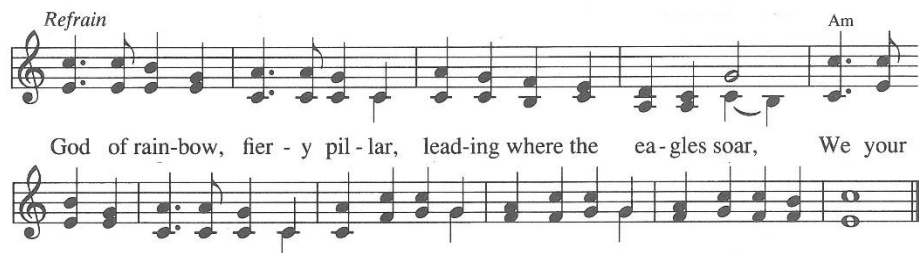
### \*Song of Parting *In the Midst of New Dimensions*



1 In the midst of new di-men-sions, in the face of chang-ing ways,  
2 Through the flood of starv-ing peo-ple, war-ring fac-tions and de-spair,  
3 As we stand a world di-vid-ed by our own self-seek-ing schemes,  
4 We are one and we are man-y all per-sua-sions, old and young,  
5 Should the threats of dire pre-dic-tions cause us to with-draw in pain,



Who will lead the pil-grim peo-ples wan-dering in their sep-arate ways?  
Who will lift the ol-ive branch-es? Who will light the flame of care?  
Grant that we, your glob-al vil-lage, might en-vi-sion wid-er dreams.  
Each a gift in your cre-a-tion, each a love song to be sung.  
May your blaz-ing phoe-nix spir-it res-ur-rect the church a-gain.



## \*Benediction

## \*God's Light Goes Forth

## \*Music for Going Forth *March of the Kings*—arr. Noble Cain Traditional tune (Provence, prior to 13c.?)

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

**DIRECTIONS:**  
Three Kings Day, also known as Epiphany, is celebrated on January 6th of each year. Unscramble the letters to find words associated with this Christian feast day.

### Three Kings Day

<p>HRRMY _____</p> <p>SAFIEENNRKCN _____</p> <p>LAIZYHOD _____</p> <p>HOEP _____</p> <p>ATFSE _____</p> <p>GINSK _____</p> <p>PPHINYAE _____</p> <p>UYJNRAA _____</p> <p>AAABZHTLR _____</p> <p>HODER _____</p> <p>JSESU _____</p> <p>CLEROIHM _____</p>	<p>ISARHTCIN _____</p> <p>BTISMAP _____</p> <p>HTISX _____</p> <p>VOERAENLIT _____</p> <p>CIRAEML _____</p> <p>ARST _____</p> <p>IAGM _____</p> <p>MNWESEI _____</p> <p>PRAACS _____</p> <p>OGDL _____</p> <p>BABY _____</p> <p>MHEEBTLH _____</p>
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# Announcements

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

## **TODAY! Speaker Series: On the Frontlines of Amazon**

Select Sundays | 11:15am-12:15pm | Heritage Room & Zoom

Amazon is an American multinational technology company which focuses on e-commerce, cloud computing, digital streaming, and artificial intelligence. It has been referred to as "one of the most influential economic and cultural forces in the world." The company was founded by Jeff Bezos from his garage in 1994, initially as an online marketplace for books. It is the now the world's largest online retailer.

Our speaker, Pat Wilkins, is on the front lines of Amazon's distribution network in the St. Louis area and in his capacity as Sr. Operations Manager is in charge of 1000 employees at Amazon's facility in Berkeley. His insights into the culture of Amazon and its commitment to the economic welfare of the community promises to be eye-opening, and instructive.

### **Zoom:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84691476997?pwd=aEM2ZURYWURLNmkwD0EzV0VHV1lyQT09>

**Meeting ID:** 8469147 6997 | **Passcode:** 181565 | **Dial** (312) 626-6799

## **Tuesday Evening Dialogue New Book January 10**

2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays | 6:00pm potluck | 7:00pm book discussion | Heritage Rm

Please join us for our next TED session when we discuss the first half of the novel *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman. It is a beautifully written story and incredibly funny about the importance of friendship and social connection. Contact Helen Race: [raceh@att.net](mailto:raceh@att.net).

## **Tuesday Afternoon Dialogue New Book Starting Jan 17-Mar 7**

1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays | 2:00-3:00pm | Zoom only

TAD's next book will be *The Personal Librarian* by Marie Benedict. starts January 17th and continues on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays until March 7th.

Historical fiction, it's the remarkable story of J. P. Morgan's personal librarian, Bella da Costa Greene, the Black American woman who was forced to hide her true identity and pass as white to leave a lasting legacy that enriched our nation. This author has written other historical fiction books, with strong emphasis on the individual histories of remarkable women.

Contact Jackie Eiffert: [jeiffert2@gmail.com](mailto:jeiffert2@gmail.com) | (661) 378-6781

### **Zoom:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84691476997?pwd=aEM2ZURYWURLNmkwD0EzV0VHV1lyQT09>

**Meeting ID:** 836 7061 7428 | **Passcode:** 480007 | **Dial** (312) 626-6799

## January 2023 Alzheimer's News

From presentations at the 15<sup>th</sup> Clinical Trials on Alzheimer's Disease (CTAD) Congress Nov. 29-Dec. 2 in San Francisco.

There is promising news about the use of C2N Diagnostic's Precivity AD and Precivity AD2 Blood Tests as Blood-Based biomarkers in the diagnosis of Alzheimer's Disease. New research shows that neurologists and memory care specialists were better able to evaluate and change medical management of patients with cognitive impairment using the C2N Diagnostic's Precivity AD Blood Test.

Additional research confirms performance of the Precivity AD2 Blood Test and p-tau217 Ratio test screening high risk individuals for entry into trials.

You can learn more by going to [www.alz.org/help-support/resources](http://www.alz.org/help-support/resources) or the Alzheimer's Helpline which is accessible 24/7 via 800-272-3900 and staffed by master's level clinicians to assist with crisis situations, decision making, and disease information. You can find virtual dementia caregiver resources online at [alz.org/covid19help](http://alz.org/covid19help). Tools and support are also available in Spanish.

Want to learn more about the Alzheimer's Association and what they do here in St. Louis? Visit [alz.org](http://alz.org) and/or contact PUCC's Faith Outreach Ambassador with the Alzheimer's Association, Joyce Ruiz at [joyceruiz7@gmail.com](mailto:joyceruiz7@gmail.com)



**The Three Kings**, selected verses, by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Three Kings came riding from far away,  
Melchior and Gaspar and Baltasar;  
Three Wise Men out of the East were they,  
And they travelled by night and they slept by day,  
For their guide was a beautiful, wonderful star.

The star was so beautiful, large and clear,  
That all the other stars of the sky  
Became a white mist in the atmosphere,  
And by this they knew that the coming was near  
Of the Prince foretold in the prophecy.

And when they came to Jerusalem,  
Herod the Great, who had heard this thing,  
Sent for the Wise Men and questioned them;  
And said, "Go down unto Bethlehem,  
And bring me tidings of this new king."

And the Three Kings rode through the gate and the guard,  
Through the silent street, till their horses turned  
And neighed as they entered the great inn-yard;  
But the windows were closed, and the doors were barred,  
And only a light in the stable burned.

And cradled there in the scented hay,  
In the air made sweet by the breath of kine,  
The little child in the manger lay,  
The child, that would be king one day  
Of a kingdom not human, but divine.

His mother Mary of Nazareth  
Sat watching beside his place of rest,  
Watching the even flow of his breath,  
For the joy of life and the terror of death  
Were mingled together in her breast.

They laid their offerings at his feet:  
The gold was their tribute to a King,  
The frankincense, with its odor sweet,  
Was for the Priest, the Paraclete,  
The myrrh for the body's burying.

And the mother wondered and bowed her head,  
And sat as still as a statue of stone,  
Her heart was troubled yet comforted,  
Remembering what the Angel had said  
Of an endless reign and of David's throne.

Then the Kings rode out of the city gate,  
With a clatter of hoofs in proud array;  
But they went not back to Herod the Great,  
They knew his malice, feared his hate, returned to their homes by another way.



# Prayer List

as of January 4, 2023

## Celebrations

**The Twelve Days of Christmas... and Blessings at the New Year!**  
**All the acts of kindness, justice and equity near and far.**

## Concerns

**Family & friends of Joan Biest** - grieving and giving thanks for her.

A Memorial Service will be in the Historic Sanctuary this Saturday...

Visitation 10am; Service 11am; Luncheon in Fellowship Hall at 12pm

**Cherie and Mike Stolze** - as she is just home from the hospital.

**Marion Pleis** - at Mercy Rehab Ctr after hip surgery. She'd be blessed by mail - 14561 N Outer 40 Rd, Chesterfield 63017... use home address as return (not sure of discharge) - 3374 Lake Bend Dr, Valley Park 63088.

**Joe and Lana Biondo** - he was hospitalized for several days with the flu and pneumonia Christmas week... now improving at home.

**Pinky Wilcoxon** - home after a few weeks in the hospital and rehab.

**Davis Weas** - recuperating from shoulder surgery.

**Doug and Val Detjen** - healing after his hip surgery.

**Schulenburgs** - Kaylyn & David's Milo William born 11-30 is in NICU.

breathing with cpap, no more PICC line, weighing 2 lbs, 12.7 oz... lots of skin to skin with parents and cared for by incredible doctors and nurses.

**Josh** - healing after recent bone marrow transplant (Tarr).

**Matt Albers** - recent cancer diagnosis (Lori Connors' friend's son).

**Kevin Ceballos and family** - as his father had surgery on January 3.

**All impacted by Covid-19.**

**Families grieving at the New Year.**

## Continuing

**Alice** - healing after recent surgery (sister of Ellie Svenson).

**Edwin & Maria** - his cancer returned; thought he was cured (Runtz).

**Angie** - recent diagnosis of stage 2 Hodgkin's Lymphoma (Rosenberger).

**Gail, Bill and Christopher Haack** - chronic health challenges.

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

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

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

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

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

**Brooke** - that she would find love and start a family of her own.

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

**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.

## Home-Centered/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]

**David Smith** - *Anthology of Town & Country*; 1020 Woods Mill Rd;

#310; St Louis, MO 63017; 636-200-5076 [birthdate: July 24]

(Father of Deb Carter).

**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

**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 & those dealing with meds.**

**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.

# Baptism of Christ

Sunday, January 8, 2023

## Mathew 3:13-17

### *Possibilities Unfolding*

*Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."*

Don't you wonder what Jesus remembered about the day of his baptism? Was it his thoughts, the inner knowing that this would be the "proper" way to "fulfill all righteousness"? Was it his relationships and conversations, like John's reluctance to perform the sacrament, followed by his consent? Was it his physical sensations, like the feel of the cool water on dry and dusty skin? Would he most remember the miraculous arrival of the dove and the voice from heaven asserting his belovedness?

When asked what they remembered about baptisms, their own or loved ones', two United Church of Christ clergywomen shared these strong memories.

Nicole Pickens recalls, "I remember my baptism vividly. I was 12 years old. The baptistry was located behind the chancel, with a window cut to about waist height. I could see my family and friends below. It was January 6, and the waters in which I was immersed were chilly! My pastor gently hurried me to my mom and a hair dryer. On the way home, Mom smiled and said we should stop at the grocery store for cake because we had a new birthday to celebrate."

Meg Wilson adds, "When my daughter was baptized the minister said to the congregation 'is she worthy of God's love?' Everyone applauded and answered yes! Since becoming ordained I ask the question and people joyfully respond yes. I do it when I introduce the child to the congregation. Worthy is a powerful word!"

What do you remember about your baptism? The physical sensations? The words spoken? The relationships with others present? Your own internal knowing? If you don't remember your own, what other baptisms have been impactful to you?