

WHEN HATE
IS LOUD
LOVE
MUST BE
LOUDER



PARKWAY
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



www.parkwayucc.org

June 25, 2023

Contents

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- 4 10:00am Worship
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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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parkwayucc.org | contact@parkwayucc.org

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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

Scripture Reader: Kris Impastato

Flowers: Greg Schmelig in honor of PRIDE

Subscribe to our email lists: Sign up at 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/videos 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

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

Anniversaries

6/25 MAXEINER, Tom & Mary (23)

6/27 ROESLER, Paul & Stephanie Polster (31)

6/30 CONNORS, Dan & Lori (34)

Birthdays

6/21 SCHULENBURG, David

6/22 SEETHARAMAN, Jay

6/24 MASON, Lisa

6/24 SCHEFFEL, William

6/25 DOMBEK, Charles

6/27 SHELTON, Peter

6/29 DEUSER, June

6/30 LITZINGER, Nancy

6/30 WADDELL, Andrew

4th Sunday *after* Pentecost

Sunday, June 25, 2023 | 10:00am | Sanctuary & Facebook Live

Meditation *For me, life is about being positive and hopeful, choosing to be joyful, choosing to be encouraging, choosing to be empowering.*

~Billy Porter

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 *With Palms Before Him Went*—Douglas E. Wagner

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Lighting of the Candles & Ringing of the Bell

Welcome Song *For the Beauty of the Earth* #473, v2 and 4



- | | | | |
|------------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. For the beau-ty | of the earth, | For the glo - ry | of the skies, |
| 2. For the won-der | of each hour | Of the day and | of the night, |
| 3. For the joy of | ear and eye, | For the heart and | mind's de - light, |
| 4. For the joy of | hu - man love, | Broth-er, sis - ter, | par - ent, child, |
| 5. For Thy church that | ev - er - more | Lift - eth ho - ly | hands a - bove, |



For the love which	from our birth	O - ver and a - round	us lies,
Hill and vale,	and tree and flower,	Sun and moon, and	stars of light,
For the mys - tic	har - mo - ny	Link-ing sense to	sound and sight,
Friends on earth, and	friends a - bove,	For all gen - tle	thoughts and mild,
Of - fering up on	e - very shore	Her pure sac - ri - fice	of love,

Refrain



Lord of all, to Thee we raise This our hymn of grate-ful praise.

Scripture Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17 (CEB – Common English Bible)

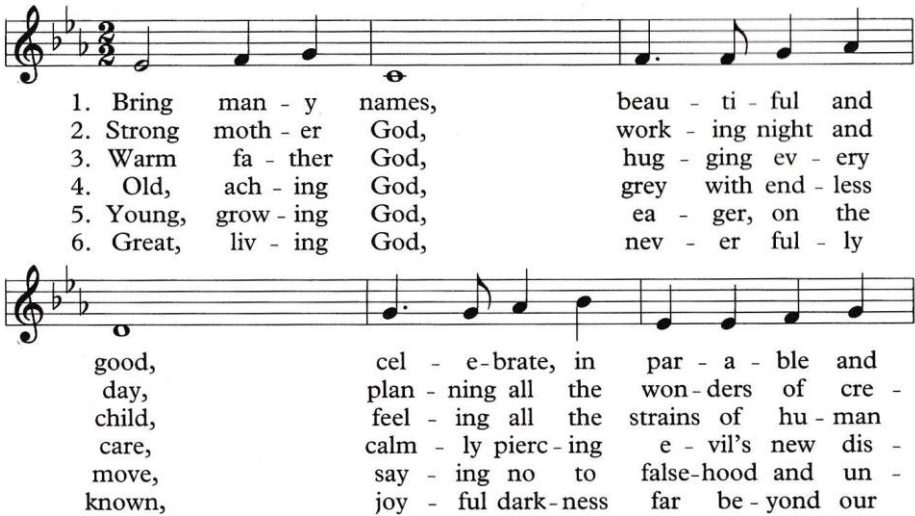
Lord, listen closely to me and answer me, because I am poor and in need.
Guard my life because I am faithful. Save your servant who trusts in you—you!
My God! Have mercy on me, Lord, because I cry out to you all day long. Make
your servant's life happy again because, my Lord, I offer my life to you,
because, my Lord, you are good and forgiving, full of faithful love for all those
who cry out to you. Listen closely to my prayer, Lord; pay close attention to
the sound of my requests for mercy. Whenever I am in trouble, I cry out

because you will answer me. My Lord! There is no one like you among the gods! There is nothing that can compare to your works! All the nations that you've made will come and bow down before you, Lord; they will glorify your name, because you are awesome and a wonder-worker. You are God. Just you come back to me! Have mercy on me! Give your servant your strength; save this child of your servant! Show me a sign of your goodness so that those who hate me will see it and be put to shame—show a sign that you, Lord, have helped me and comforted me.

***Call to Worship**

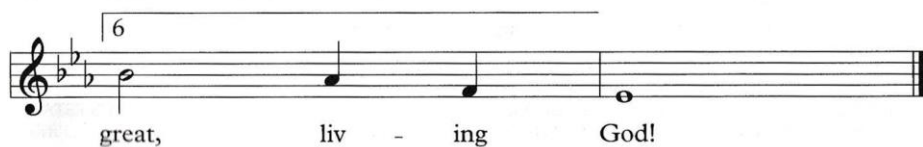
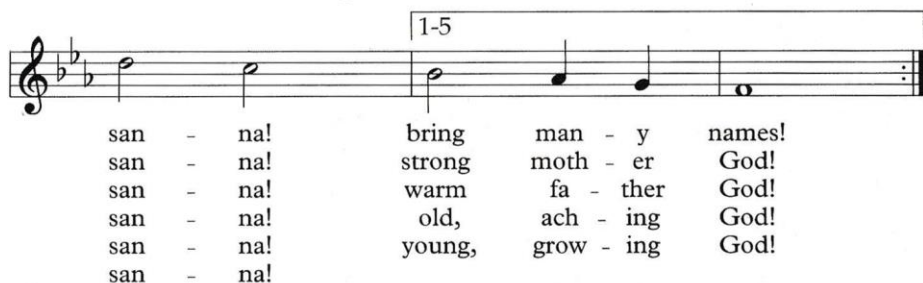
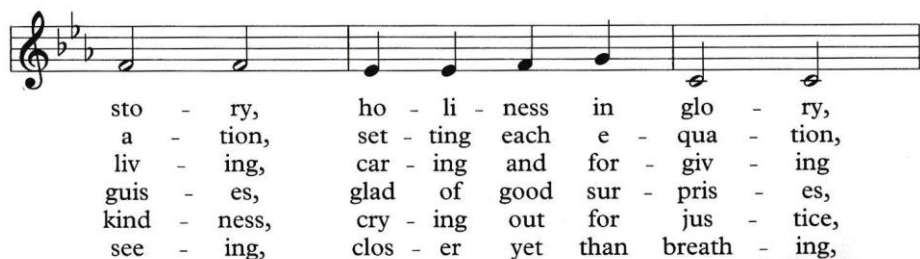
- One: Come to let go and float in peace.
- Many: **We lay down our burdens as the Holy reaches out to set us free.**
- One: Come to receive blessing upon blessing.
- Many: **We empty our hands that we might receive some of God's good gifts.**
- One: Come to find friendship, laughter and embrace.
- Many: **We express our awe, wonder and gratitude as we feel the guidance and graces of Jesus.**
- One: Come to trust and move forward with confidence.
- Many: **We come to lean into the Spirit and to take deep life-giving breaths.**
- All: **Let us worship our God together—Creator, Christ and Spirit.**

***Song** *Bring Many Names #2047*



1. Bring man - y names, beau - ti - ful and
2. Strong moth - er God, work - ing night and
3. Warm fa - ther God, hug - ging ev - ery
4. Old, ach - ing God, grey with end - less
5. Young, grow - ing God, ea - ger, on the
6. Great, liv - ing God, nev - er ful - ly

good, cel - e - brate, in par - a - ble and
day, plan - ning all the won - ders of cre -
child, feel - ing all the strains of hu - man
care, calm - ly pierc - ing e - vil's new dis -
move, say - ing no to false - hood and un -
known, joy - ful dark - ness far be - yond our



***Opening Prayer** UCC General Synod 2019

God, whose first language is love, open us to the change that is possible if we embrace your love with all of who we are. Open our ears, and our eyes, and our mouths that we might live your love with every breath. Open our minds to know your love is behind us, the foundation of who we are, and that your love goes before us to lead the way towards whatever tomorrow may bring. Help us give ourselves completely to love ~ to loving you, and our neighbor, and the stranger, and the immigrant, and the exile, and our friends, and ourselves ~ with all our hearts, and our minds, and our spirits. 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 *Jesus Loves Me*

Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.

Little ones to him belong. They are weak, but he is strong.

Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus love me.

Yes, Jesus loves me. The Bible tells me so.

Scripture John 1:1-14 (NRSV – New Revised Standard Version)

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.

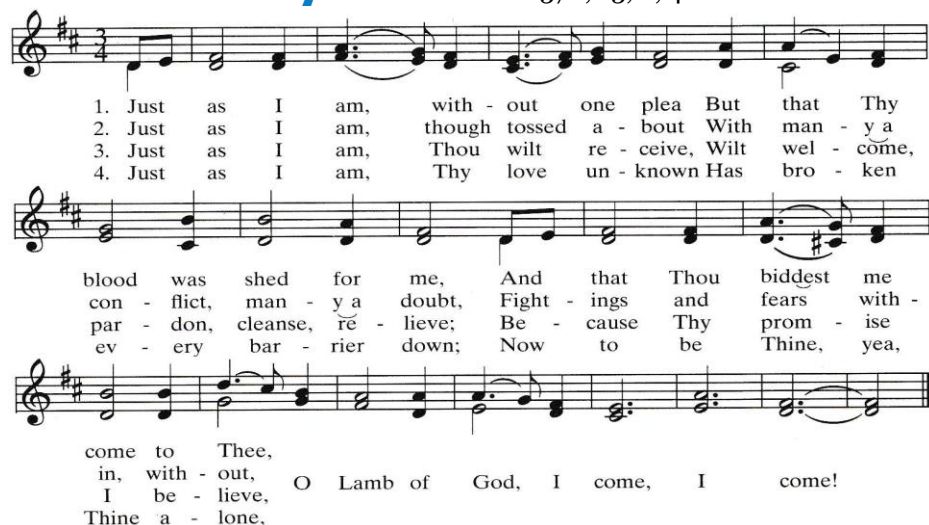
The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of humans, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen this glory, the glory of God's only son, full of grace and truth.

Moment of Silent Reflection

Sermon

Invitation to Prayer *Just as I Am* #370, v3, 2, 4



1. Just as I am, with - out one plea But that Thy
2. Just as I am, though tossed a - bout With man - y a
3. Just as I am, Thou wilt re - ceive, Wilt wel - come,
4. Just as I am, Thy love un - known Has bro - ken

blood was shed for me, And that Thou biddest me
con - flict, man - y a doubt, Fight - ings and fears with -
par - don, cleanse, re - lieve; Be - cause Thy prom - ise
ev - ery bar - rier down; Now to be Thine, yea,

come to Thee,
in, with - out,
I be - lieve, O Lamb of God, I come, I come!
Thine a - lone,

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.]

Mission Moment Isaiah 58 School Supplies—Evelyn Buretta

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 *Come Away to the Skies*—Arr. Patricia Lou Harris Based on the tune *Middlebury* from Southern Harmony, 1840.

*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

Gracious God, bless our offering that it may reach and touch those who hunger, who hurt, who seek hope. As part of the global village, we care about all of our siblings. We pray for peace and justice, for liberty to those oppressed, for joy to those who are weary - in honor of and commitment to your desire for freedom and love for all. Amen.

*Song of Parting *In the Midst of New Dimensions* #2238



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.

Refrain



God of rain - bow, fier - y pil - lar, lead - ing where the ea - gles soar, We your



peo - ple, ours the jour - ney now and ev - er, now and ev - er, now and ev - er - more.

***Benediction**

***God's Light Goes Forth**

***Music for Going Forth** *Festive Postlude—Iouri Grichetchkine*

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Announcements

Please submit your announcement at www.parkwayucc.org/communications.
Bulletin and eNews deadline: noon Monday.

Parkway Speakers Series

Behind the Scenes at "Justice,"—Jeff Demerath, Esq.

June 25, 2023 | 11:15am - 12:15pm Heritage Room & Zoom

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84691476997?pwd=aEM2ZURYWURLNmkwZ0EzV0VHV1lyQT09#success>

EM2ZURYWURLNmkwZ0EzV0VHV1lyQT09#success

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

The Justice Department is tasked with the enforcement of federal law and the administration of justice in the United States.

Our speaker, Jeff Demerath started as a DOJ attorney in DC and then returned home to St. Louis as a private practice attorney representing clients in cases against Justice, including criminal cases.

JHLTB—Jesus Has Left the Building

If you'd like to be a part of the team, let us know: kevin@parkwayucc.org
Please put July 30 on your calendar. Many more details to come!

6/27 Scandinavian Duo Lynx Lynx Tue, June 27 | 5:30-7:30pm

Lynx Lynx, the Scandinavian Duo, performs MidSummer traditional music featuring Hardanger Fiddle and tunes recreating the experience of fresh chill air and mountain streams. Parkway United Church of Christ extends its welcome to All. Refreshments: waffles and fruit a good snack for hungry children and everyone to enjoy. Bring your friends. Call Lynn Sableman at (314) 609-6918 to reserve a seat, or ask questions. The program is partially sponsored by Norwegian Society of StLouis (NSSL) the cost is \$15, children 10 and under are free. Check them out: vidarskrede.com/

6/27 Tuesday Evening Dialogue New Book

2nd & 4th Tuesdays | 6:00pm potluck | 7:00pm Discussion | Heritage Room

Please join us for the first session on our new book *Proof of Heaven* by Dr. Eben Alexander. He is a neurosurgeon who became very ill with a severe form of meningitis, went into a coma and was not expected to survive due to massive brain damage. As his family prepared for the worst, he woke up and and told the story his near death experience . Unlike other accounts of near death experiences, he is able to explain why his brain was incapable of fabricating his journey into the afterlife. Are you a believer or skeptic? Read the first 100 pages then come and share your thoughts with us!
Contact Helen Race: raceh@att.net | (314) 401-4382

Colors of Hope: A Discussion for Pride Month

When we recently hosted the Open and Affirming (ONA) Convocation, one of the vendors gifted us with two dozen copies of *Colors of Hope: A Devotional Journey from LGBTQ+ Christians*. We give thanks for the LGBTQ+ people of faith who have been vulnerable and hopeful as they shared some of their life experiences for all of us to learn from.

Colors of Hope draws upon the iconic Pride flag and raises a call to embody our beliefs. Using Gilbert Baker's original flag and its eight colors and themes—life, healing, sunlight, nature, art and magic, harmony and serenity, sexuality and spirit—readers are invited to reflect, engage, and apply discoveries. The devotions present a range of views, all full of hope, paired with thematic journal prompts and calls to action.

Join us for a discussion on Zoom from 10-11:15am or in person in Kevin's Office from 6:45-8pm on Thursday, June 29. Feel free to answer the journal questions ahead of time or just read the short chapters and come ready for conversation. Complimentary copies of the book are available on the round table in the Gathering Space now.

The book includes an invocation, introduction, weekly reading, daily reflections, benediction, and list of resources. *Colors of Hope* is an expansive resource for personal growth and collective change. It brings the joy, beauty, and power of the rainbow to life.

Reminder: [Zoom in the morning; in-person in the evening...](#)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82587215760?pwd=MG9nV3kzZmdtbVphNmFQTWICWXIEUT09> | Meeting ID: 825 8721 5760; Passcode: 835458

Questions? Reach out to kevin@parkwayucc.org

Caring for the Welfare of Children: Support for Isaiah 58 School Supplies Ministries

The following items are requested:

1. Underwear, including socks, undershirts, all sizes, adults too, but especially for children, considering that older high school students need larger sizes;
2. 200 composition books, college-ruled (narrow lines), one-subject, spiral-bound. Watch for sales when shopping and take advantage of late July and August Back-to-School sales.
3. Hosts to sponsor activity tables on the Isaiah 58 Back-to-School Fair on Saturday, 22 July, 8:00 to 1:00 PM. Let me know if anyone is interested in this portion of the school fair day.

Underwear, all sizes, and composition books can be collected through Aug 31.

Evelyn Buretta: burettaevelyn@gmail.com | (636) 220-1280

Join us for the Fourth of July Celebration

As we approach one of the most exciting times of the year, the Intertwine Interfaith group would like to extend a warm invitation to join the Fourth of July celebration at Schroeder Park in Manchester. [Weather permitting.]

We will meet at 7:30pm and bring Halal desserts to share. Fireworks begin at 9pm. Please park near Olympia Gymnastics Training Center - 79 National Way Shopping Center, Manchester, MO 63011

Please RSVP by June 30: <https://forms.gle/xxmsVjgar5VDREER9>

We'll have a shuttle for our group. More details to follow. Contact Lisa Mason: (314) 395-4444 | lmason624@sbcglobal.net

UCC Habitat for Humanity Auction ~ Fall Fundraiser

Our UCC Build is gearing up for an online auction this fall. We are looking for a volunteer from PUCC to seek items and publicize the auction in our congregation and beyond. We hope that we'll discover great items for others to buy: Cardinals tickets, Dinner at a favorite place, Service from a company, A pie a month. The items are only limited by our imagination. Already, someone has donated a truck load of firewood, an HVAC check, a gift certificate to a restaurant. More info? Contact Tom McKenzie: mckenzie1947@att.net or Keith Karau keith.karau@gmail.com

Habitat helps build strength and stability ~ at Habitat for Humanity, we build. We build because we believe that everyone, everywhere should have a healthy, affordable place to call home. When a family helps build or improve a place they can call home, they are also building a better community as they build a better life for themselves.

Living in Christian Community

Our conduct toward one another at Parkway UCC is governed by the *Living in Christian Community* standards adopted by the Church Council in 2019. Unfortunately, we have had a situation where a member has been found in violation of those standards for repeated inappropriate boundary-crossing behavior. We expect that person will not participate in church activities as requested, and we hope they find personal healing, which may ultimately permit resumption of church involvement. We ask all members and friends to be sensitive and respect confidentiality in this difficult situation.

<https://parkwayucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Living-in-Christian-Community-adopted-January-2019.pdf>

Some LGBTQ Facts and History for Pride Month

1. The term LGBTQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning.
2. According to a 2021 survey by the Williams Institute, an estimated 4.5% of adults in the United States identify as LGBTQ.
3. The first known gay rights organization, the Society for Human Rights, was founded in Chicago in 1924, but it was short-lived and its members faced harassment.
4. The first gay rights legislation was introduced in the Illinois State legislature in 1971.
5. The Stonewall riots in 1969, which were sparked by a police raid on the Stonewall Inn in New York City, are widely considered to be a turning point for the LGBTQ rights movement.
6. The American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders in 1973.
7. In 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage in all 50 states in the case of *Obergefell v. Hodges*.
8. Despite some legal advancements, LGBTQ individuals still face discrimination and disproportionately high rates of poverty, homelessness, and mental health issues.
9. The T in LGBTQ often refers to transgender people, an umbrella term for individuals whose gender identity does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth.
10. The Q in LGBTQ can stand for queer or questioning. Queer is an umbrella term for non-heterosexual and non-cisgender identities, while questioning refers to individuals who are exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Pride Month Unscramble

Using the letters in 'pride month', come up with:

3 words that have 8 letters

4 words that have 7 letters

5 words that have 6 letters

6 words that have 5 letters

7 words that have 4 letters

8 words that have 3 letters

Prayer List

as of Wednesday, June 21, 2023

Celebrations

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

Seasonal beauty.

Ongoing Search for Christian Education and Youth Directors – we have begun interviewing promising candidates.

Juneteenth today - Monday, June 19 - oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery – www.juneteenth.com ...

<https://conta.cc/3XdgKWE>

LGBTQ+ Pride Month.

Concerns

Val & Doug Detjen - as she continues to recuperate *at home*.

Peter LaSalle & Sally Dodge - as he is recently home from the hospital.

Cassie Rosenberger's sister Christa - healing after recent surgery.

Avery (20 months old) and parents Kyle & Laura - as she has been diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy (Kari/Keith Borgmann's granddaughter).

The memory of Barb Kuhlmann that continues to bless us one year after her death (June 16).

The ongoing power struggles and violence in Sudan, elsewhere

The grief in Uganda after tens of deaths at a local school last week

The continuing war in Ukraine.

Continuing

Cassie Rosenberger's mother Martha - ongoing cancer treatments.

Joseph Miller - long road to healing (son of Deb Carter).

Tito, Sarah & Family - his outpt rehab after stroke (Mason nephew).

Barb - complications with cancer tx and at odds with insurance co (Tarr)

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

Bill Darland - ongoing health issues.

Gail, Bill and Christopher Haack - chronic health challenges.

Coree Mix - settling into new home by DePaul Hospital... 11777 Minot Drive, Bridgeton 63044; 314-412-0150. They'd love a call and/or visit!

Jan - experiencing dementia (great-grandma of Coree Mix).

Angie - living with Hodgkin's Lymphoma (Rosenberger).

Matt Albers - finished chemo and radiation; surgery next (Connors).

Theresa - surgery/treatment/recovery - aggressive cancer (Schwarz).

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

Sharon - variety of health challenges (Rogers).

Val - strength and patience (Jim Winkelmann's 102 year-old mother).

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 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

JoJo & Derek and Natty Kersting as they await a baby this summer.

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.

4th Sunday *after* Pentecost

Sunday, June 25, 2023

Matthew 10:24-39

Daring Discipleship

Open and Affirming Sunday

[Jesus said:] What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops.

On this Open and Affirming Sunday, you are invited to take a moment to give thanks in your prayers for the life and ministry of the Rev. Anne Holmes. In April 1982, the Rev. Anne Holmes was ordained at her home church, Emmaus UCC in Vienna, Virginia. Rev. Holmes was the first open lesbian to be ordained in the United Church of Christ.

At the time, forty-one years ago, her ordination made national news. *The Washington Post* wrote a long story* about Rev. Holmes, who was ordained into a chaplaincy role. The paper reported,

“In the statement of the spiritual journey that brought her to seek ordination - a personal and theological biography required of all candidates -- Holmes dealt forthrightly with the homosexuality issue: How she had become aware of her sexual orientation as a college student in Tennessee, her struggles with self-hatred, how she rebelled against the advice to keep her lesbian orientation a secret because that would contradict ‘the openness with which we are called to live our lives’, she said.”

The article ends with Rev. Holmes musing that although she would like to serve a church, she did not think it would be possible for her as an out lesbian. The United Church of Christ has come a long way in the past four decades. It no longer makes the news when a gay or lesbian person is ordained. That is why today, on this Open and Affirming Sunday, we give thanks for Rev. Holmes and her pioneering courage and faith. As Jesus said in today’s scripture, what was once whispered in secret will in these days be made public and proud. Thanks be to God!

To learn more about the pioneers of the Open and Affirming movement, visit: <https://openandaffirming.org/about/history/>.

*Hyer, Marjorie. “United Church of Christ Will Ordain a Lesbian to Ministry on Sunday.” *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 24 Apr. 1982, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1982/04/24/united-church-of-christ-will-ordain-a-lesbian-to-ministry-on-sunday/df39bcc0-4032-4026-89ee-19042bc>