



Love Your Neighbor


who doesn't


 Look like you

 Think like you

 Love like you

 Speak like you

 Pray like you

 Vote like you

Love Your Neighbor

No exceptions

www.parkwayucc.org

October 29, 2023

Contents

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

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 or sending an email.

Welcome Children We invite children to full participation in worship. We also have activity bags for young children to use while they are here.

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

Scripture Reader: Gabriel Requadt

Flowers are given by Kris Impastato in memory and celebration of her in-laws' wedding anniversary

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

Birthdays

- 10/29 CLIFFORD, Daniel
- 11/2 BARNES, Steven
- 11/2 WAITE, Oscar
- 11/3 BOWERMASTER, Tod
- 11/4 NGUYEN, Pauline

Wedding Anniversaries

- 11/1 DEGROOTE, Steve & Joan (37)
- 11/4 SCHERRER, Richard & Betty (50)

22nd Sunday *after* Pentecost

Sunday, October 29, 2023 | 10:00am | Sanctuary & Facebook Live

Meditation *If I've learned anything about friendship, it's to hang in, stay connected, fight for them, and let them fight for you. Don't walk away, don't be distracted, don't be too busy or tired, don't take them for granted. Friends are part of the glue that holds life and faith together. Powerful stuff.*
~Jon Katz

Welcome Let us know you are here!

Passing the Peace of Christ

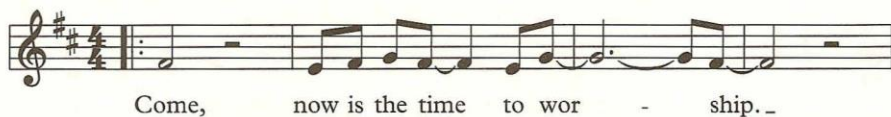
“May the peace of Christ be with you.”

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

Prelude

Lighting of the Candles & Ringing of the Bell

Welcome Song *Come, Now is the Time to Worship*



_ you are God. One day ev-ery knee will bow._

Still the great-est treas-ure re - mains_ for those who glad-

ly choose you now. _ _ _

⊕ CODA

Come. Come. Come.

Scripture Psalm 90, selected verses (CEB – Common English Bible)
 Lord, you have been our help, generation after generation.

Before the mountains were born, before you birthed the earth and the inhabited world - from forever in the past to forever in the future, you are God.

Please, quick! Have some compassion for your servants! Fill us full every morning with your faithful love so we can rejoice and celebrate our whole life long.

Let the kindness of the Lord our God be over us.

***Call to Worship** based on the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5)

- One: We come to worship for a variety of reasons – one of which is that we might learn to bring forth fruits of the Spirit...
- Many: the fruit of love, that I may love God and neighbor in ways that are deep and wide;**
- One: the fruit of joy, that I might find delight and share it with others;
- Many: the fruit of peace, that I may make peace with my words and actions;**
- One: the fruit of patience, that I might take deep breaths and not let my actions be ones rooted in frustration;
- Many: the fruit of kindness, that I may find ways to support and surprise others with blessings;**
- One: the fruit of goodness, that I might make choices that will benefit others, not just me;

Many: the fruit of faithfulness, that I may listen to the Spirit regularly and cultivate a friendship that is sturdy and hope-filled.

One: the fruit of gentleness, that I might calmly and sweetly interact with myself, others and the earth;

Many: the fruit of self-control, that I may restrain myself and think before I act.

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

***Song** *Jesus, You Once Called Disciples*

(Tune: *There's a Wideness in God's Mercy*)

Jesus, you once called disciples, choosing twelve to follow you:
Simon (also known as Peter), Andrew and Bartholomew,
Philip, Thomas, James and Matthew, Simon, Thaddaeus, John, and James —
Then there was the one called Judas. These were your disciples' names.

Women, too, were your disciples, sitting, learning, at your feet.
Mary knew your word was precious, even more than food to eat.
Martha trusted in your power when her brother Laz'rus died.
Women shared your journey, Lord, and stayed when you were crucified.
Lord, so many heard and followed, like the woman at the well.
Meeting you, the living water, she sought others she could tell.

Like the boy with loaves and fishes, like Zacchaeus in the tree,
Many gladly heard your message; many shared your ministry.
Jesus, still you call your people, "Come and follow me today!"
Some, like Paul, feel sudden wonder; some are brought up in your way.
Lord, no matter how we meet you, by your Spirit, make us new.
May we know your living presence; may we daily follow you.

***Opening Prayer**

God of signs and wonders, of love and laughter, you have modeled for us your generous love, in the gift of your son Jesus. Remake our hearts, so that we may reflect your generosity, gladly sharing our possessions, our food, our worship and our lives with our neighbors. Move us from complacency to compassion and from apathy to action. Open our minds that we may learn from those who are different from us, so that together we might be your love in the world. Amen.

***Response** *Spirit of the Living God*

**Spirit of the living God fall afresh on us;
Spirit of the living God fall afresh on us.
Melt us mold us, fill us, use us!
Spirit of the living God fall afresh on us.**

Children's Time

Children and youth remain in worship this morning as it is a Fifth Sunday and this is a One Family Worship Service.

Blessing the Children *Jesus Loves the Little Children*

**Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world.
Every child in every land,
Jesus holds them by the hand.
Jesus loves the little children of the world.**

Scripture Luke 10:29b-37 (NRSV – New Revised Standard Version)

Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.’ Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

Reflection

Song *A Lawyer Came Near* (tune: *Let All Things Now Living*)

A lawyer came near, asking Jesus a question;
he did it to test him, to find Jesus' flaws:
O Teacher, we've listened and heard what you're saying.
Now which is the greatest of all of God's laws?
With six hundred thirteen commandments to choose from,
now tell us your views! Tell us: What do you say? —
The lawyer was searching for ways to accuse him
by tripping up Jesus, that long-ago day.

Yet Jesus was wise and he knew what was happening;
he knew if he said that one law mattered more,
then he'd be accused of ignoring, belittling
the six hundred twelve that he chose to ignore.
So Jesus chose love: You should love the Lord dearly
with all of your heart and your soul and your mind.
And yes, there's another— to go, love your neighbor;
these two hold up all of the others, combined.

Lord Jesus, you teach us to love God and neighbor,
for love adds the flavor to all that we do.
At home or away, in our leisure or labor,
there's nothing that's greater than love— it is true!
And Lord, in this world that is filled with great suffering—
may we know that love is not just some ideal;
Your practical teaching is really far-reaching;
God's love is a gift that will help the world heal.

Scripture Mark 2:1-12 (MSG – The Message)

After a few days, Jesus returned to Capernaum, and word got around that he was back home. A crowd gathered, jamming the entrance so no one could get in or out. He was teaching the Word. They brought a man who was paralyzed to Jesus, carried by four men. When they weren't able to get in because of the crowd, they removed part of the roof and lowered the paralyzed man on his stretcher. Impressed by their bold belief, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "Son, I forgive your sins."

Some religion scholars sitting there started whispering among themselves, "He can't talk that way! That's blasphemy! God and only God can forgive sins."

Jesus knew right away what they were thinking, and said, "Why are you so skeptical? Which is simpler: to say to the paralyzed man, 'I forgive your sins,' or say, 'Get up, take your stretcher, and start walking'? Well, just so it's clear that I'm the Son of Man and authorized to do either, or both . . ." (he looked now at the paralyzed man), "Get up. Pick up your stretcher and go home." And the man did it—got up, grabbed his stretcher, and walked out, with everyone there watching him. They rubbed their eyes, stunned—and then praised God, saying, "We've never seen anything like this!"

Reflection

Song *Martha Labored in the Kitchen* (Tune: *Come, Thou Fount*)

Martha labored in the kitchen; there was much yet to be done!
There was cooking, cleaning, baking — too much work for anyone.
For the Lord had come to visit; Jesus sat there as her guest.
So much work! She longed to share it, so the meal would be its best.

Mary sat and humbly listened to their guest — her Friend and Lord.
She just thought of Jesus' teaching — not the need for bread and board.
So when Martha came complaining, seeking Mary's help that day.
Jesus turned to her explaining, "Mary chose the better way."

God, we see in her distraction — Martha lost sight of her goal;
In her grumbling and complaining, She forgot food for the soul.
For there's always something pressing — something urgent we must do,
Yet for us there's also blessing in the time we spend with you.

Were there days when Mary labored, helping others, serving well?
Were there times when Martha savored stories Jesus loved to tell?
May we worship, pray and study; may we serve you well today!
All are needed on the journey as we travel Jesus' way.

Scripture Luke 10:38-42 (CEB – Common English Bible)

While Jesus and his disciples were traveling, Jesus entered a village where a woman named Martha welcomed him as a guest. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his message. By contrast, Martha was preoccupied with getting everything ready for their meal. So Martha came to him and said, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to prepare the table all by myself? Tell her to help me."

The Lord answered, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things. One thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the better part. It won't be taken away from her."

Reflection

Invitation to Prayer *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*



1. What a friend we have in Je - sus, All our sins and griefs to bear!
2. Have we tri - als and temp-ta - tions? Is there trou-ble an - y - where?



What a priv - i - lege to car - ry Ev - ery-thing to God in prayer!
We should nev - er be dis - cour - aged: Take it to the Lord in prayer!



O what peace we of - ten for - feit, O what need-less pain we bear,
Can we find a friend so faith - ful, Who will all our sor-rows share?



All be-cause we do not car - ry Ev - ery-thing to God in prayer!
Je - sus knows our ev-ery weak - ness; Take it to the Lord in prayer!

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.]

Stewardship Moment *Because of You, Our Church Changes Lives*

Offering Our Gifts to God www.parkwayucc.org/giving

There is a plate up front and one on the round table in the Gathering Space.



Offering Interlude

*Response

Praise God who gives us hearts to care.
Praise God who gives us gifts to share.
Praise God for helping us to give.
So others in the world might live. Amen.

*Prayer of Dedication based on the words of Joel Miller

God, let our lives be a prayer that waters dry souls, mends broken hearts, refuses to fall and fade, seeks this world's beauty and be the friend that carries us through storms. Amen.

*Song of Parting *Shalom, Chaverim*

1. Sha - lom, cha - ve - rim! Sha - lom, cha - ve - rot! Sha - lom, sha - lom!
2. Fare - well, good friends, Fare - well, good friends, Sha - lom, sha - lom!

Le - hit - ra - ot, le - hit - ra - ot, Sha - lom, sha - lom.
Till we meet a - gain, till we meet a - gain, Sha - lom, sha - lom.

The musical notation is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The first staff includes chords Dm, Gm, C7, and Dm. The second staff includes chords Dm, Gm, A7, and Dm. There are two asterisks above the first staff, one above the first measure and one above the eighth measure.

*Benediction

*God's Light Goes Forth

*Music for Going Forth

Announcements

Turkish Food Festival with our Muslim Friends ~ TODAY

Sunday, October 29 | 9am – 6pm | TASOM ~ 664 Lemay Ferry Rd 63125
We are thrilled to invite you to the Turkish Food Festival at TASOM, a culinary celebration of delicious flavors that promise to delight your taste buds! We hope to see you there. Afiyet olsun! (Bon appétit!)

AMOE (Adventurous Men Out Early)

Thursday, November 2 | 9:15am | Heritage Room
Fellowship and coffee are always a wonderful duo. All are welcome. We are good listeners and good conversationalists.
Contact Richard Scherrer: 9ofivetpr@gmail.com | (314) 591-6803

Speaker Series November 12: Respect, Empathy, Awareness

by Katie Rodriguez-Banister

Sunday, November 12 | 11:15am | Heritage Room & ZOOM

Our speaker, Katie Rodriguez Banister survived an auto accident in 1990 that left her a quadriplegic, paralyzed from the chest down. After six months of rehabilitation and fifteen months of living with her parents, she returned to living independently in 1992.

With her husband, Steve the two co-founded *Access-4-All, llc.* with a mission to educate and empower others through motivational speaking and disability education. Katie serves as a board member of the Recreation Council of Greater St. Louis since 1992, serving now three terms as President. Katie was a performer and founding member with St. Louis' *Disability Project* for six years. She served as a board member and President of the Delta Center for Independent Living from 1996-2002 and board member of the VSA Arts of MO from 1996- 2000. She co-produced her own motivational video *Change Takes Time* as well as two music videos, *Spring* and *Beauty in the Lou.*

The speaker will appear in person in the Heritage Room following worship. You may join us live or remotely by Zoom.

Zoom Link:

us02web.zoom.us/j/84691476997?pwd=aEM2ZURYWURLNmkwdoEzVoVHV1IyQT09#success ID: 8469147 6997 | **Passcode:** 181565 | 312- 626-6799

Circle of Concern Thanksgiving Baskets

Circle of Concern serves 650 families in West St. Louis County. As part of their Thanksgiving Basket program, 6 area churches pack boxes containing 8 sought after items, including: can of pumpkin, stuffing mix, box of mashed potatoes, corn muffing mix, can of fruit, can of cranberries, jar of turkey gravy, and a container of chicken broth. These boxes are then distributed along with a pie, fresh vegetables and a \$30.00 gift card to Aldi's.

Please bring your donated items to church and leave inside the entry doors before the deadline of November 12, 2023. We are slated to pack 100 boxes. Thanks for your generosity! Lana Biondo lanabiondo66@gmail.com

Sharing Our Food with Isaiah 58

We also have an opportunity to serve our midtown ministry with our neighbors at Isaiah 58. We are requested to provide 300 2-lb bags of flour for Thanksgiving Day clients. As you are able, consider adding the 2-lb bags of flour to your shopping carts until November 12. Place your donations in the marked box under the donation tables in the lobby. Thanks in advance for your continued support. Questions? Evelyn Burette
buretteevelyn@gmail.com; 636-220-1280

Worship with us next Sunday in the Historic Sanctuary

As with every year on All Saints Sunday, we will reconnect with our ancestors in the faith by worshiping across the street in the Historic Sanctuary at 10am. Once the parking lot over there is full, we will have crossing guards to help with getting across the street.

Gabriel's Senior Sermon at Eden Seminary Chapel

At 6pm on Tuesday, November 7, I will be offering my senior sermon at Eden. It's a huge milestone in a seminarian's journey, and I would love for my new church family to be able to experience this worship service with me. I hope you can make it! Eden is at 475 E Lockwood Avenue in Webster Groves 63119. Ample parking is available. Please follow the signs to the chapel – use elevator or stairs. Questions? Contact gabriel@parkwayucc.org; 314-872-9330

TAD ~ Tuesday Afternoon Dialogue... Zoom with us!

All are welcome to join us on Zoom on Tuesday, November 7 at 2pm as we work with the same book at TED (see above) -*The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek*.

Come 15 minutes early if you want to chat and build community before we start the book discussion...

Zoom...<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83670617428?pwd=bUxPZEdDMlU4ay9oNndTWw4yZUYwUT09>

(312) 626-6799; Meeting ID: 836 7061 7428; Passcode: 480007

Questions? Contact Jackie Eiffert, jeiffert2@gmail.com; (661) 378-6781

Intertwine Interfaith Coffee House in the Gathering Space

Saturday, November 11 | 7:00pm – 8:30pm | Parkway UCC

Join us here at PUCC with our Muslim and Jewish friends for a Coffee House. If you would like to share music, poetry, or another talent at the event, please indicate that when you sign up via the link below.

All ages are welcome! Coffee and tea will be served. Please indicate in the sign up if you would like to bring halal/kosher baked goods to share.

Now more than ever, we understand the beauty and blessing of interfaith friendship.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0E49A9A72CA6F58-intertwine>

For your 2024 calendar ~ ~ Sunday, April 28 @ 1:30 tour of Kaplan Feldman Holocaust Museum led by our friend Vera Emmons from Shaare Emeth. Questions? Lisa Mason (217-257-0525) lmason624@sbcglobal.net or Paige Penico andipaige@hotmail.com... *Shalom, Salaam, Peace*

‘A new thing’: Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson’s historic installation as our UCC General Minister and President surrounded by multiple traditions, interfaith partners and joyful noise!



[Rev. Thompson wears a gift stole, given to her by fellow UCC Officers Blackmon and Makari on behalf of the National Setting. The stole includes a picture of Thompson’s parents and a heart with the Jamaican flag]

“God is doing a new thing. God is making all things new.” If anyone doubted that this was a historic occasion, the Rev. Merlyn Hyde Riley made sure they knew.

The theme of newness, as part of God’s promise, was woven throughout Hyde Riley’s sermon during the Friday, Oct. 20 installation of the Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson as the United Church of Christ’s 10th General Minister and President.

The jubilant celebration — featuring a diversity of religious practices, a wide assembly of interfaith dignitaries and powerful, praise-filled performances — was held at Lakewood Congregational Church in Lakewood, Ohio, just a few miles west of the UCC’s headquarters in downtown Cleveland.

Thompson became the first woman to lead the UCC after she was elected by the denomination’s 34th General Synod on July 3 in Indianapolis. And, as former UCC General Minister and President the Rev. Geoffrey Black noted during the installation, she is also the first woman of African descent and the first immigrant to become head of the UCC.

Hyde Riley echoed this in her sermon.

“It is good news not only for the United Church of Christ but for you, Karen Georgia, a former stranger in the land, now to become the first Black woman, the first woman, a descendant of formerly enslaved people, to lead this church,” she said. “As we would say in Jamaica, ‘What a thing.’”

* **Read more here:** <https://www.ucc.org/a-new-thing-thompsons-historic-installation-surrounded-by-multiple-traditions-interfaith-partners-and-joyful-noise/>

Prayer List

Wednesday, October 25 2023

Celebrations

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

Concerns

Karen Grayheck - preparing for upcoming back surgery.

Helen Buenger - cornea transplant October 24 (Lori Connors' mom).

Nelson Spencer - medical concerns (Ellie Svenson).

Dodge/LaSalle Family - Jaime grieving over her father; Beckett as both his grandfathers have died in two months; nephew deployed (AF).

The continuing war in Ukraine.

The war in the Mideast - Israel and Hamas....

Jon Easton (John Nourse's step-son) and family live in Jerusalem - their daughter lives on the border and escaped miraculously....

Continuing

Becca Palmgren - medical tests and discerning treatment options.

Kathleen Tarr - some success with her mental health program.

Cassie Rosenberger's mother Martha - ongoing cancer treatments.

Sege Ruiz - paralyzed from car accident on September 16.

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

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 a new home with great roommates.

Chris - hospice care after brain cancer surgery (Doug's sister-in-law).

Gram Ruth - Lymphoma diagnosis; hip surgery recovery (L Schneider).

Renee and family - very aggressive onset of dementia (McKenzie).

Carol - healing after recent vascular surgery (Mary Akers).

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

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

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

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

The people of Afghanistan, Libya, Morocco after natural disasters.

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 - *NHC Cool Springs*; 211 Cool Springs Blvd #1610; Franklin, TN 37067; 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]

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.

22nd Sunday *after* Pentecost

October 29, 2023

Matthew 22:34-46

The Compassionate Life

UCC Higher Education Sunday

People ask Jesus questions for a variety of reason. Sometimes they want to seek answers or ideas. They want to know more about themselves and their place in Christ's kin-dom. They want to hear Jesus' teachings and stories. And sometimes, they just want to trick Jesus, or trip him up. They want to ask him a question with no answer.

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, an expert in the law, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

After this exchange, Jesus asks a question that those gathered cannot answer, about the nature of humanity and divinity. Question and answer exchanges are part of living and loving. On this Higher Education Sunday, we honor those institutions connected with the United Church of Christ where questions are welcome not as a barrier to faith, but as a sign of it.

There are 48 educational institutions related to the United Church of Christ, including academies, colleges, universities, and seminaries. They span the United States. Each is independent, self-governing, and fully accredited.

Each institution expresses partnership with the church. Closely related schools participate as full members of the UCC Council for Higher Education. Others are historically related, which means they recognize a past relationship with the church but are not full members of the Council.

These institutions provide opportunities to explore moral values, the importance of social responsibility, an ethic of service, and the ability to think critically. Many have campus ministries that are ecumenical and interfaith. Each embodies the UCC ethos where God is Still Speaking (<https://www.ucc.org/about/higher-education/>).