



*We
Look
and
Love*



www.parkwayucc.org

December 24, 2023

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Limitless Love | Courageous Action | Spirited Inquiry

Purpose Statement

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

Congregational Statement

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

PARKWAY UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST

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John Nourse, *Pastor Emeritus*

Welcome *to* Parkway

Thank you for joining us this morning! If you are with us virtually, please let us know you are here by commenting in the chat 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 Cynthia Levin

Flowers today Meera Williams in honor of family

Please consider signing up to donate flowers and/or read scripture in 2024:
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0D4CA4AC23AB9-scripture1>

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

The numbers below are called Warmlines (not Hotlines).

They are peer run by people with lived experience.

Not all of them are 24/7/365

Teen Warm Line: 1 800-248-8336

Black Warm Line: 1-800-604-5841 (They are divested from the police)

Trans Warm Line: 1-877-565-8860

Project Return Warm Line: 1-800-448-9777 (run away)

Learn more about warm lines: <https://warmlines.org/warmdir.html>

Anniversaries

- 12/27 DARLAND, Nancy & Bill (68)
- 12/27 TUPPER, Tom & Leslie (43)
- 12/28 BURCHAM, Stan & Kathy (21)
- 12/28 HAACK, Bill & Gail (45)
- 12/29 YESS, Gregory & Kari (34)

Birthdays

- 12/24 SCHARF, Ingrid
- 12/25 FAUSS, Roger
- 12/27 GRAYHECK, Karen
- 12/28 LYONS, Zoe
- 12/28 ZOLLER, Bob
- 12/30 ROGERS, Gerry

Poinsettias

- John & Joyce Ruiz in memory of their parents
- Linda Tossing in honor of her family
- Nick & Sue McMillon in honor of all family
- Sue Stohr
- Evelyn Buretta
- Keith & Kari Borgmann in honor of their family
- Sue Moellering
- Kris & Andy Impastato in memory of Larry Gilbert
- Jackie Eiffert in memory of Hilda and Eugene Meyer
- Cindy Levin in memory of Tim Chang-Yit
- Carol and Harold Cobb
- Jean Mueller
- Bill & Pat Owens in memory of Pat's mother

Our Church is a Firearm-free Zone

Some questions have recently arisen about firearms on church premises. Under Missouri law, the concealed carry right does NOT extend to church premises. Missouri law provides by default that concealed firearms are not permitted in churches, unless specifically authorized by the church.

No such authorization has been made at Parkway. Missouri law also bars fire-ready firearms in churches (with certain law enforcement exceptions) where people are assembled for worship.

The Church Council has decided to make these rules clear for all by having No-Firearms-Allowed signs posted on church entry doors. This does not represent a change in policy, since that has been the effect of existing Missouri law, but Council believes the clear notice will best serve everyone.

4th Sunday of Advent: Love

Sunday, December 24, 2023 | 10:00am | Sanctuary & Facebook Live

Meditation *The Almighty appeared on earth as a helpless human baby, needing to be fed and changed and taught to talk like any other child. The more you think about it, the more staggering it gets. Nothing in fiction is so fantastic as this truth of the Incarnation. ~J.I. Packer*

Welcome Let us know you are here!

Passing the Love of Christ

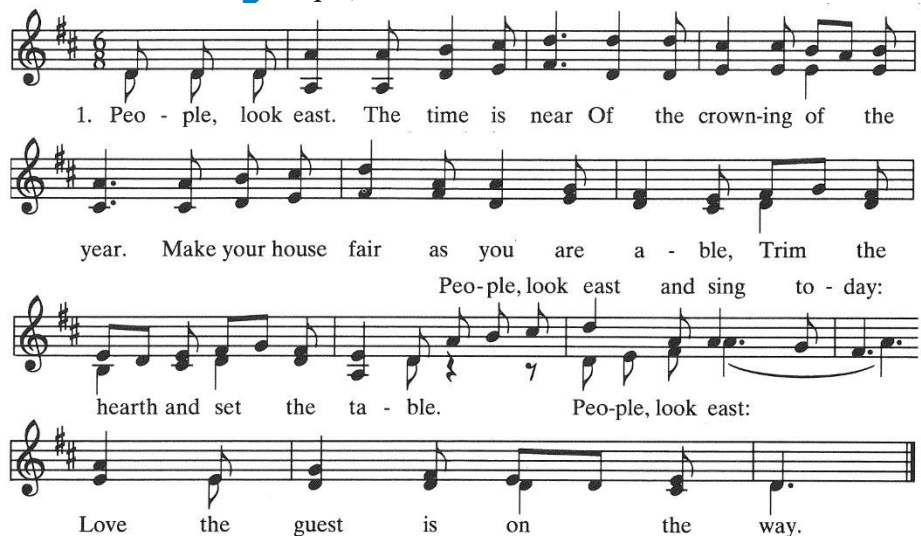
“May the love of Christ be with you.”

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

Prelude *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*—from Geistliche Kirchengesang, arr. by Fred Bock

Lighting of the Candles & Ringing of the Bell

Welcome Song *People, Look East*



1. Peo - ple, look east. The time is near Of the crown-ing of the
year. Make your house fair as you are a - ble, Trim the
Peo-ple, look east and sing to - day:
hearth and set the ta - ble. Peo-ple, look east:
Love the guest is on the way.

Scripture 1 Corinthians 13 (NRSV – New Revised Standard Version)

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

***Gathering at the Advent Wreath ~ Love**

One: Gathering gifts along the way, we have arrived on this last Sunday of Advent.

Many: Today we receive the unconditional love of God and renew our commitments to be in love with one another.

One: We grow in our patience, taking deep breaths as necessary.

Many: We seek ways to put kindness into action without being a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

One: We work to soften our edges so we don't come across as envious, boastful, arrogant or rude.

Many: We tether ourselves to grace so we aren't irritable or resentful.

One: We put our feet squarely on the solid ground of faith - so we can carry difficult things.

Many: We align ourselves with others in solidarity - so they don't have to go this road alone.

One: We look to Jesus as a model. We open ourselves to the Spirit as a guide. We trust the Creator to help us renew and start again when we aren't faithful or effective in our loving.

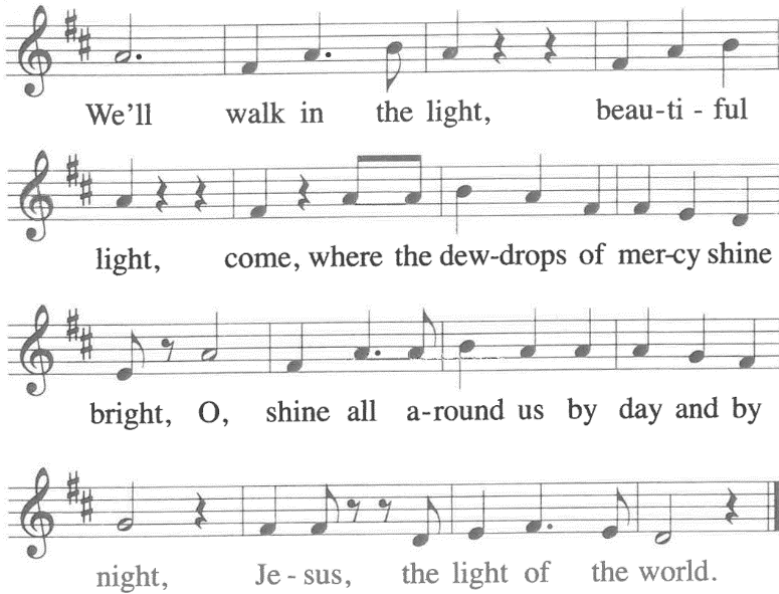
All: Let us worship our God together - Creator, Christ and Spirit.

***Advent Candle Lighting ~ Love**

*** Prayer at the Wreath**

Holy One, we wait expectantly, trusting that you are present, active and constantly at work. As we light the four Advent candles around the wreath, we ask for a deeper faith and the ability to watch and wait for you—and to be ready to put our commitments into action at any moment. We become hope rooted in your hope, peace rooted in your peace, joy rooted in your joy and love rooted in your love. Amen.

*Response *Jesus, the Light of the World*



The image shows four staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are written below the notes. The melody is simple and suitable for children's singing.

We'll walk in the light, beau-ti - ful
light, come, where the dew-drops of mer-cy shine
bright, O, shine all a-round us by day and by
night, Je - sus, the light of the world.

Children's Time

For children under the age of 3, parents are invited to take them to Room 01 (upper level) where one of our teachers will meet them at the door. Children from age 3 to 5th grade can follow one of our teachers down to Room 12 (lower level), and youth from 6th to 12th grade can follow a teacher to Room 15 (also lower level). For children in Room 01, parents please pick them up after worship. Children and youth from age 3 thru high school can be met in the Gather Space just outside the Sanctuary after worship, as the teachers will bring them back upstairs after class.

Blessing the Children *Be Near Me, Lord Jesus*

**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 Luke 2:1-5 (CEB—Common English Bible)

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.)

And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

Carol *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*



1. It came up-on the mid-night clear, That glo - rious song of old,
2. Still through the clo - ven skies they come, With peace-ful wings un - furled,
3. And ye, be-neath life's crush-ing load, Whose forms are bend-ing low,
4. For lo, the days are has-tening on, By proph-et bards fore - told,



From an - gels bend - ing near the earth, To touch their harps of gold:
And still their heaven-ly mu - sic floats O'er all the wea - ry world:
Who toil a - long the climb-ing way With pain - ful steps and slow,
When with the ev - er - cir - cling years Comes round the age of gold;



"Peace on the earth, good will to all, From heaven's all - gra - cious King":
A - bove its sad and low - ly plains They bend on hov - ering wing,
Look now! for glad and gold-en hours Come swift - ly on the wing:
When peace shall o - ver all the earth Its an - cient splen-dors fling,



The world in sol - emn still-ness lay, To hear the an - gels sing.
And ev - er o'er its Ba - bel sounds The bless-ed an - gels sing.
O rest be - side the wea - ry road, And hear the an - gels sing.
And the whole world give back the song Which now the an - gels sing.

Moment of Silent Reflection

Sermon

Invitation to Prayer *In a Feed Box, In a Stable*

Lyrics by Carol Winfrey Gillette

BEECHER 8.7.8.7 D (*Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*)

In a feed box, in a stable, Jesus slept upon the hay;

So, our God, you came among us, bringing peace on earth that day.

Beautiful upon the mountain! Christ, you bring us God's shalom;

May we share your love and justice in each land and town and home.

In a shelter, poor and homeless, sleeps a child upon her bed;

In a basement hides a family, bombs exploding overhead.

Jesus, you knew want and hunger; your own family fled the sword.

May we see you, may we hear you, in each one oppressed or poor.

In the church, we seek your presence;

Prince of Peace, you meet us here:

See! A person seeking shelter. See! Another filled with fear.

See! A world where lives are broken; give us strength and help us care,

Till our love for every neighbor fills each thought and act and prayer.

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.]

Mission Moment *Second Mile Advent*—Nancy Litzinger

Circle of Concern | **Emmaus Homes** | The Christmas Fund

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 *Gabriel's Message*

Based on the Basque carol hymn arr. by Edgar Pettman and John Wickham

*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

Loving God, help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the 'yes' of Mary and Joseph, the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and the worship and gift giving of the wise men. Amen.

*Song of Parting *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*



1. Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born King.
2. Christ, by high - est heaven a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord!
- *3. Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righ-teous-ness!



Peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!"
Late in time be - hold Him come, Off - spring of the vir - gin's womb.
Light and life to all He brings, Risen with heal - ing in His wings.

Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise, Join the tri - umph of the skies;
 Veiled in flesh the God-head see; Hail the in-car-nate De - i - ty,
 Mild He lays His glo - ry by, Born that we no more may die,

With the an-gel - ic host pro-claim, "Christ is born in Beth-le-hem!"
 Pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em-man-u - el.
 Born to raise us from the earth, Born to give us sec-ond birth.

Hark! The her-ald an - gels sing, "Glo-ry to the new-born King!"

***Benediction**

***God's Light Goes Forth**

***Music for Going Forth** *Organ Improvisations on Truro*

Hymn tune *Lift up our Heads, Ye Mighty Gates*—Thomas Williams (1799)

Announcements

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

Christmas Eve Services this Evening

4:30pm Family Friendly Worship—A lively and spirited service with Nativity scriptures, carols and contemporary reflections. We will sing *Silent Night* by candlelight as we prepare to go out into this holy night.

7:30pm Candlelight & Communion—This traditional service includes the Christmas Gospel, choir and carols as we ponder what this love story means for us today. We will share Communion at our open table and sing *Silent Night* by candlelight.

Services will be in the Sanctuary and on Facebook Live ~

Christmas Dinner Potluck

Monday, December 25 | 2:00-4:00pm | Heritage Room

Please join us for a fun, festive Christmas potluck dinner. Ham and rolls provided... together we will do the rest!

Please contact Gerry and Mike Rogers with RSVP, questions and/or comments at gcr123055@gmail.com; 314-434-7122

Come to the Quiet is a silent retreat, January 5-7, at Mercy Conference and Retreat Center just down the street from church off Clayton Road.

The retreat opens with 5:30pm supper Friday and concludes at 11am on Sunday. The cost is \$165 for a private room with a private bath. The retreat has minimal structure with optional sessions and informal spiritual companionship to help participants connect with the silence within.

Dawn Stringfield, Executive Director of Mercy Conference and Retreat Center will lead the retreat. Dawn was one of the founders of Lydia's House here in St Louis. Register at www.mercycenterstl.org by January 1.

Annual TWELFTH-NIGHT FEAST & FESTIVAL 2024

Mark your calendars now for our annual TWELFTH-NIGHT FEAST & FESTIVAL This year's Twelfth-Night at Parkway UCC is on Friday, January 5, 2024 (the 12th Night of Christmas). FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC! Gather here at Parkway UCC at 6pm, with the festivities beginning at 6:30pm. Featuring several visiting Choirs and other Musicians presenting their best (and last) of this Christmas Season's music PLUS . . . good feasting after! More information to come! Any questions, please contact Parkway UCC's Music Director at barry@parkwayucc.org

Inquirers' Gathering - for those who want to know more about PUCC and who want to be known

Monday, January 8, 2024 | 6:30-7:45pm | Dessert | Heritage Room

Our goals that evening include:

- getting to know one another a bit more
- describing Parkway's worship, outreach, education, leadership, fellowship
- taking a look at our denomination, the United Church of Christ
- sharing ideas about the exciting future of Parkway UCC
- soliciting your thoughts on how we can be a more welcoming and inviting community of faith
- discussing some key issues of faith
- answering any of your questions

You will find our time together meaningful and informative.

Some churches call this sort of gathering a New Members Class—we do not.

While we do know that there are a number of visitors who have expressed interest in becoming members of the church, we do not assume that Inquirers are seeking membership. We just want to be hospitable, get to know you and have the chance to express gratitude for your presence among us.

Kevin Cameron: kevin@parkwayucc.org | 314-872-9330

Childcare is available that evening if requested ahead of time.

Tuesday Afternoon Dialogue's Next Book Starting 1/16/2024 ***The Anthropocene Reviewed* by John Green**

TAD is pausing for the holidays but will resume on Tuesday, January 16 at 2:00pm. We're looking forward to hearing what books everyone enjoyed over our break. Discussion from 2:100pm – 3:00pm and fellowship st at 1:45pm.

TAD's next book is John Green's *The Anthropocene Reviewed: Essays On a Human-Centered Planet*. From Amazon: "*The Anthropocene* is the current geologic age, in which humans have profoundly reshaped the planet and its biodiversity. In this remarkable symphony of essays adapted and expanded from his groundbreaking podcast, bestselling author John Green reviews different facets of the human-centered planet on a five-star scale—from the QWERTY keyboard and sunsets to Canada geese and Penguins of Madagascar. Funny, complex, and rich with detail, the reviews chart the contradictions of contemporary humanity. As a species, we are both far too powerful and not nearly powerful enough...*The Anthropocene Reviewed* is an open-hearted exploration of the paths we forge and an unironic celebration of falling in love with the world." TAD would love to have you. Please contact Jackie Eiffert for more information. jeiffert2@gmail.com; 661-378-6781

Zoom

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83670617428?pwd=bUXPZEdDMlU4ay9oNndTWW4yZUYwUT09\(312\)626-6799](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83670617428?pwd=bUXPZEdDMlU4ay9oNndTWW4yZUYwUT09(312)626-6799)

Meeting ID: 836 7061 7428; Passcode: 480007

Parkway Adventurers

Urban Archaeology: Lost Buildings of St. Louis

Pulitzer Arts Foundation, 3716 Washington Boulevard, St Louis MO 63108

Join the PUCC Adventurers on Thursday, January 25 as we visit the Pulitzer Arts Foundation's exhibition *Urban Archaeology: Lost Buildings of St. Louis*. The modern Pulitzer building is accessible, parking is close, and entry is free. We'll meet at Parkway at 9:30am for carpooling or 10:00am at the Pulitzer Arts Foundation.

Afterward we'll head to a restaurant to be determined for lunch.

This fascinating exhibition brings together salvaged architectural elements from landmark buildings, residential homes, and neighborhood institutions built in St. Louis between 1840 and 1950. The artifacts on display represent important histories of material innovation, labor, and the everyday lives of the people who inhabit the city. The exhibition sheds light on the city's history, revealing complicated legacies of power, wealth, and neglect that shape our experience of the built environment and daily life. Those people with a long history in the St. Louis area will remember many of the buildings from which the artifacts were salvaged. Included is a 15 minute film about St. Louis architecture, demolition, and revitalization, and an opportunity to provide your own input to the exhibit if you'd like. For more information:

<https://pulitzerarts.org/art/urban-archaeology-lost-buildings-of-st-louis/>

There is a very small modern art exhibit in the building that can be viewed as well if you'd like, Sarah Crowner: Around Orange.

Contact Jackie Eiffert at jeiffert2@gmail.com with any questions.

Join the Children's Ministry Team

We are looking for two additional volunteers to join the team and help teach Children's Ministry in 2024. It's an excellent way to serve in this church, and we have a vibrant Children's Ministry program. So, if you have a joy teaching children from PreK to 3rd Grade, we'd love to have ya! It's pretty low commitment, so not too demanding, so if you feel you'd have a couple weeks out of the month free, or even just one week a month, then this could be the right fit for you.

If interested, please reach out to Gabriel Requadt, our Director of Christian Education, for more information: gabriel@parkwayucc.org

Looking for More Singers for PUCC Sanctuary Choir

If you've always imagined singing in the choir—or the thought is just occurring to you for the first time right now, why not give it a try?

We're needing extra singers right now—reach out to barry@parkwayucc.org 636-485-5378 to let him know!

Pledge Reminder

Last minute reminder –

If you haven't yet pledged and plan to, we encourage you to do so as soon as possible. We are nearing the end of the campaign and your pledge is important for us to complete the budget for 2024.

Blank cards are in the Gathering Space or contact either Amy Yakel or Harold Cobb: Cjcobb@aol.com | (314) 965-4147

Pledge online>> <https://parkwayucc.org/giving/pledge/>

Caring for God's Creation

Along with our theme of being environmentally responsible and reducing single use plastic bottles, the Sustainability Team would like to promote more usage of reusable water bottles or thermoses. To do this we encourage you to bring your personal reusable bottle (be sure and put your name on the bottle) to church with you each Sunday. We will have a larger container of ice water that you can use to fill up your bottle with the water or lemonade provided. Or you can choose to fill up your thermos with coffee and take it into the sanctuary for worship. Glasses and mugs will, of course, still be available if you prefer.

Here are a couple of Christmas tips and reminders: Most Recycling and Trash companies will allow you to place your real Christmas tree by the curb for yard waste pickup (whether you subscribe to the yard waste or not). In addition, most communities provide a place to drop off your Christmas tree. Just pay attention to where these opportunities will be held in your community. Also, any wrapping paper other than foil backed, is recyclable. No need to add these to the landfill.

A New Year's Resolution and goal for Sustainability Seekers will be to work harder at promoting ways to lower our carbon footprint - at home, at church and in the community.

Thank you,

Your Sustainability Seekers

Second Mile Advent Gifts

We continue to receive your gifts for 2nd Mile Advent—an opportunity to stretch our hope, peace, joy and love across the area and the wider church. All gifts are shared evenly among the three mission partners below in January. Please clearly mark your financial gift “2nd Mile Advent.” You may want to honor someone in your life with a 2nd Mile Gift—perhaps that person who is hard to buy for and/or who does not have any real needs right now. We - and so many other - are grateful for your generosity.

Circle of Concern—circleofconcern.org/

Each day, Circle of Concern feeds families from the food pantry, shares financial assistance, and distribute school supplies, Thanksgiving turkeys or holiday gifts.

Mission: Circle of Concern feeds the hungry and provides assistance to low-income families living in west St. Louis County.

Our Vision: Improving every life in the community by reducing hunger and poverty

Our Values: integrity in all they do; respecting the innate worth of every Circle stakeholder, including clients, volunteers, donors, staff and community partners, and striving to reflect that respect in every interaction; collaborating with many partners so that the work of Circle is successfully accomplished; being responsible stewards of the time stakeholders donate, the talents they share and the funds they invest; committing to excellence which ensures the highest quality services for clients today and the resources to sustain them in the future.

Emmaus Homes —emmaushomes.org/

Emmaus Homes knows that adults with disabilities want to be independent. In order to do that, they need a home and a community that embraces their unique abilities. EH believes everyone deserves the resources needed to live independently.

EH understands it's tough to manage life alone, which is why for over 125 years, as a faith-based organization, they have provided high-quality service caring for the whole person for their whole life – including the individual's spiritual life.

The Christmas Fund—pbucc.org/index.php/christmas-fund-home

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas “Thank You” gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

Over the last few years with COVID-19 pandemic and inflations of all kinds, the emergency financial needs of many who serve the church have increased dramatically. In such a time as this, the need for the Christmas Fund is more urgent than ever.

Poetry from PUCers

The Clacker by Evelyn Buretta
Memories of Christmas toys
took me back to my earliest wish
for a magnificent rocking horse
seen in a store window on a trip
from the farm to an actual town.
Mom said the horse was gone
when she went back to get it.
Oh, so upsetting to me.

At age 4 I didn't understand that
my parents couldn't afford
a big fancy rocking horse
when we ate only what we grew
preserved enough for winter months
and Mom did laundry on a washboard.

I received a small wooden pull-toy
painted yellow and carved like a duck
that made a clacking sound as I
pulled it around room to room.
I enjoyed the heck out of this toy.
Who needed a big ole' horse
when I could walk around all day
with this great clacking toy?

Two Girls by Sora, pen name
walking around
talking through sound
when out of the blue
feelings came true
"I love you"
I had no clue
how red I became
two girls
looking eye to eye

Kyle's December Birthday by Kari Borgmann
The eyes of a child
Bright, brown, soft
Not the Christ child
But born of a similar time

Grown now, on his own
Always my child
Always my baby
I celebrate his birth
His life in this season
Of hope and love

Prayer List

Wednesday, December 20, 2023

Celebrations

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

Seasonal beauty.

Families and individuals celebrating the holidays together.

Nancy and Jack Litzinger - settling in now at *The Willows at Brooking Park* 207 S. Woods Mill Rd, #1211; Chesterfield, MO 63017.

Judy Waddell - as she continues to settle in at *McKnight Place*.

Coree Mix - also experiencing a fresh start - 8649 North Ave, StL 63114.

Rebecca Ray - that her book on suicide prevention will be published for a wide audience so her wisdom, gentleness, compassion will help others.

Students, families, faculty and staff - at the close of a semester.

Gabriel Requadt - graduating from Eden Seminary - MDiv this month!

Concerns

Pinky Wilcoxon - recuperating from surgery after a fall at home.

Jean Mueller - grieving *Peaches* - attacked and killed by another dog.

Don Wandless - strengthening and getting medications aligned.

Bill Hilgeman - continued healing after serious injuries.

Cherie & Mike Stolze - as they mourn and celebrate Cherie's father...

Visitation Thu 21st 4-8pm, Funeral Fri 22nd 10:30am at Kutis Lemay Ferry

Roger & Donna Fauss - grieving/giving thanks for his brother-in-law.

Jackie - loving/supporting ailing mom (102), step-dad (103) (Larson).

Grieving/struggling families or individuals as the holidays unfold.

The continuing war in Ukraine.

War in the Mideast - Israel and Hamas....Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Yemen

Continuing

Becca Palmgren - medical tests and discerning treatment options.

Cassie Rosenberger's mother Martha - ongoing cancer treatments.

Gram Ruth Hughes - Lymphoma; receiving hospice care (Schneider).

Seger Ruiz - paralyzed from car accident in September.

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

Annette Harrison - recovering from injuries (Stifel).

Trudy - living with cancer; healing after a fall (Scharf).

Nelson Spencer - medical concerns (Ellie Svenson).

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

Cherie & Mike Stolze and family - her chronic health challenges.

Bill & Nancy Darland - his ongoing health issues.

Gail, Bill and Christopher Haack - chronic health challenges.

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

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

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

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

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]

Judy Waddell - *McKnight Place*; 3 McKnight Pl, #229; StL MO 63124; 314-312-1129 [birthdate: August 13]

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.

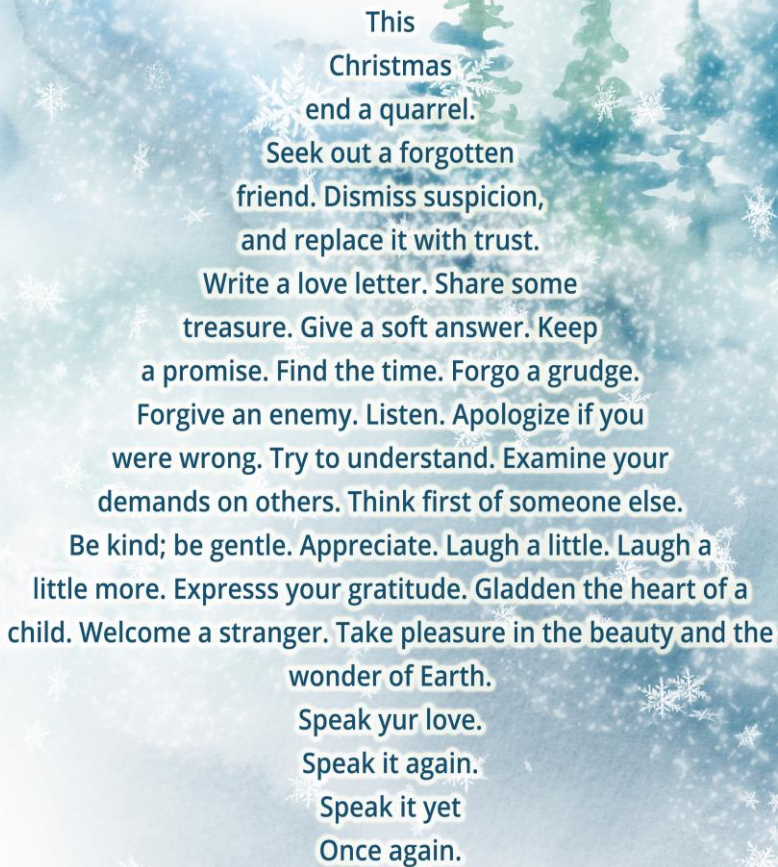
Conversations about the Death Penalty in the United States.

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.



This
Christmas
end a quarrel.
Seek out a forgotten
friend. Dismiss suspicion,
and replace it with trust.
Write a love letter. Share some
treasure. Give a soft answer. Keep
a promise. Find the time. Forgo a grudge.
Forgive an enemy. Listen. Apologize if you
were wrong. Try to understand. Examine your
demands on others. Think first of someone else.
Be kind; be gentle. Appreciate. Laugh a little. Laugh a
little more. Express your gratitude. Gladden the heart of a
child. Welcome a stranger. Take pleasure in the beauty and the
wonder of Earth.
Speak your love.
Speak it again.
Speak it yet
Once again.

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4th Sunday of Advent: Love

Luke 1:26-38

Birth of a Promise

Christmas Fund Offering

This is the fourth Sunday of Advent, the season when we set time aside to express the human longing for God to be right here with us. There are many moods in this season. Some of us are too busy and some of us are too lonely. Some of us take joy in all that there is, some of us grieve all that is lost. Some of us find comfort in the same story told a new way each year, some of us just want to hurry along to the turning of the year. Some of us find deep peace in the rituals of this season, and some of us feel very anxious. And many of us feel all these things! On each of our Advent Sundays, we are invited to sink deeply into our spiritual lives with a time of devotion and contemplation, knowing that God meets us exactly where we are - busy and lonely, joyful and grieving, comfortable and hurried, peaceful and anxious.

The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Luke 1:30-33

First, read the focus scripture for this day.

Read it again, more slowly, perhaps even out loud.

Now read it a third time.

What are the questions or images that come to mind?

Here are some to get you started. You may have others.

-During the Advent season, we have expressed longing for God, found comfort in God's presence and praised God for all the good we have received. Now we open our arms to embrace the Christ Child. Which of these moods of Advent are you feeling now? Or are you experiencing another mood altogether?

-What are some of your Christmas Eve traditions of the past? How are those traditions like or unlike how you will spend this Christmas Eve? How do those traditions help you draw close to the Child? Are there some traditions which need to shift or change?

-A big word for the coming of the Christ Child is *incarnation*. Spend some time with this word and this idea. How is incarnation confusing or uncertain for you? How is incarnation real or profound for you?

-If you are intentional about it, the season of Advent can help you get closer to God and deepen your spiritual life. Do you have ideas about how you might continue this intention beyond Christmas Day? What will help you live into that intention?

End your time of meditation with this prayer: *Incarnate One, We long to be with you because you long to be with us. Your longing brings us the gift of the Christ Child. Help us to respond with a gift worthy of that gift, today and all days.*

Amen.