



*Christmas
Eve*



www.parkwayucc.org
Sunday, December 24, 2023

Contents

- 3 4:30pm Worship
- 8 7:30pm Worship

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

2841 North Ballas Road | St. Louis, MO 63131 | 314-872-9330 [p] | 314-872-9014 [fax]
parkwayucc.org | contact@parkwayucc.org

Lana Biondo, *President of the Church Council* [puccpresident@parkwayucc.org]
Kevin Cameron, *Pastor* [kevin@parkwayucc.org]
Barry Luedloff, *Music Director* [barry@parkwayucc.org]
Gabriel Requadt, *Christian Education & Yth Director* [gabriel@parkwayucc.org]
Mona Smith Herberg, *Office Administrator* [mona@parkwayucc.org]
Kathy Ferrell, *Office Assistant* [kathy@parkwayucc.org]
John Dwyer, *Treasurer* [treasurer@parkwayucc.org]
Dawn Friedmann, *Bookkeeper* [dawn@parkwayucc.org]
Julie Connors and Becca Palmgren, *Nursery* [juliestl1992@yahoo.com]
Kim Livengood, *Church Historian* [historian@parkwayucc.org]
Joyce Ruiz, *Alzheimer’s Assn Faith Outreach Ambassador* [JoyceRuiz7@gmail.com]
Polly Rutherford, *Environmental Justice/Sustainability Seekers* [pollyrutherford@gmail.com]
John Nourse, *Pastor Emeritus*



Christmas Eve

Sunday, December 24, 2023 | 4:30pm | Sanctuary & Facebook Live

Meditation *Probably the reason we all go so haywire at Christmas time with the endless unrestrained and often silly buying of gifts is that we don't quite know how to put our love into words. ~Harlan Miller*

Lighting the Candles & Ringing the Bell

Prelude Traditional and seasonal hymns and carols
Christmas Processional—arr. R. Kevin Boesiger (based on the tune *Antioch*)

Gathering Songs

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

**It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
“Peace on the earth, good will to all,
from heaven’s all-gracious King.”
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.**

Angels We Have Heard on High

**Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o’er the plains,
And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing!

**Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the new-born King!
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and people reconciled.”
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies;
With angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem.”
Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the new-born King!**

Welcome

Sharing the Hope, Peace, Joy & Love of Christ

Centering in the Light of Christ John 1:1-5

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.

Gathering at the Advent Wreath: The Christ Candle

One: As the sun goes down, we come to light all the candles.

Many: **As the darkness arrives again, we gather around the things that last – these things that guide and bless us.**

One: We light the candle of hope.

Many: **The best is yet to come. We seek confidence now.**

One: We light the candle of peace.

Many: **We turn away from violence of all kinds.**

One: We light the candle of joy.

Many: **We feel it bubbling up inside of us. It is contagious.**

One: We light the candle of love.

Many: **Love is the beginning, middle and end of it all.**

All: **As we light the Christ Candle in the center of this wreath, we make room for his gifts to shine in and through us.**

Lighting the Advent Candles and the Christ Candle

Prayer at the Wreath

Holy One, we have been waiting expectantly, trusting that you've been present, active and constantly at work. As we light all the Advent candles around the wreath and the Christ Candle in the center now, we ask for a deeper faith and the ability to watch and wait for you ~ and to put our commitments into action at any given moment. We are becoming fruits of hope from your hope, peace from your peace, joy from your joy and love from your love. Amen.

Response *Jesus, the Light of the World*

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.

Hebrew Scripture Lesson Isaiah 9, selected verses

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Parent, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Response *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.**

The Christmas Message

Luke 2:1-4

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David.

**O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

Luke 2:5-7

Joseph went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

**Away in a manger, no crib for His bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.**

Luke 2:8-11

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be delivered to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

**The First Noel, the Angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep
On a cold winter's night that was so deep
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel. Born is the King of Israel!**

Luke 2:12-14

The angel said to them, "This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favors!"

**Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing,
Come, adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo... Gloria, in excelsis Deo.**

Luke 2:15-20

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them.

**What child is this, who, laid to rest, On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring Him laud, The Babe, the Son of Mary**

Invitation to 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 2nd Mile Advent/Christmas

Emmaus Homes | Circle of Concern | The Christmas Fund

Invitation to Generosity



Offertory Anthem *Oh Holy Night*—arr. Bill Holcombe

Bill Haack, bass

***Prayer of Dedication** based on the words of Norman Wesley Brooks
Holy One, Christmas is forever—not for just one day. For loving, sharing, giving, are not to be put away. We root ourselves in your transforming gifts that we will be gift givers all year long. We commit ourselves anew to speaking and acting in ways that bring more hope, peace, joy and love into the world. Amen.

***Sharing the Light of Christ**

Tilt only the candle being lit.

***Congregational Carol** *Silent Night/Stille Nacht*

The first verse in German links us to our church's German founders.

*Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht! Alles schläft, einsam wacht
Nur das traute, hochheilige Paar. Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh', Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh'!*

**Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon virgin mother and child!**

Holy Infant, so tender and mild.

Sleep in heavenly peace. Sleep in heavenly peace.

**Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,**

Heavenly hosts sing: Alleluia,

Christ the Savior is born. Christ the Savior is born.

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light

Radiant beams from Thy holy face,

with the dawn of redeeming grace,

Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth. Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

***Benediction**

***Music for Going Forth**

Organ Improvisation on "Antioch"—tune by G.F. Handel

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice!—German Folk Tune, 14th c.



Christmas Eve

Sunday, December 24, 2023 | 7:30pm | Sanctuary & Facebook Live

Meditation *Christmas is most truly Christmas when we celebrate it by giving the light of love to those who need it most. ~Ruth Carter Stapleton*

Gathering Music Traditional and seasonal hymns and carols
Christmas Processional—arr. R. Kevin Boesiger (based on the tune *Antioch*)

Lighting the Candles & Ringing the Bell

Choral Introit *When I Kneel at the Manger Tonight*—Mary Kay Bell
What can I give to him, a heavenly King?
What can I give to him? I have nothing to bring,
But I'll offer my heart when I kneel at the manger tonight . . . tonight.

Welcome

Sharing the Hope, Peace, Joy & Love of Christ

Carols

O Come, All Ye Faithful

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant

O come ye, o come ye to Bethlehem

Come and behold Him, born the King of Angels

O come, let us adore Him... O come, let us adore Him...

O come, let us adore Him. Christ the Lord

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

**It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
“Peace on the earth, good will to all,
from heaven’s all-gracious King.”**

The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.

Angels We Have Heard on High

**Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o’er the plains,
And the mountains in reply Echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing!

**Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the new-born King!
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and people reconciled.”
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies;
With th’ angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem.”
Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the new-born King!**

Centering in the Light of Christ John 1:1-5

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.

Gathering at the Advent Wreath: The Christ Candle

One: As the sun has gone down, we come to light all the candles.

Many: **As the darkness deepens again, we gather around the things that last – the very things that guide and bless us.**

One: We light the candle of hope.

Many: **The best is yet to come. We seek confidence now.**

One: We light the candle of peace.

Many: **We must turn away from violence of all kinds.**

One: We light the candle of joy.

Many: **We feel it bubbling up inside of us. It is contagious.**

One: We light the candle of love.

Many: **Love is the beginning, middle and end of it all.**

All: **As we light the Christ Candle in the center of this wreath, we make room for his gifts to shine in and through us.**

Lighting the Advent Candles and the Christmas Candle

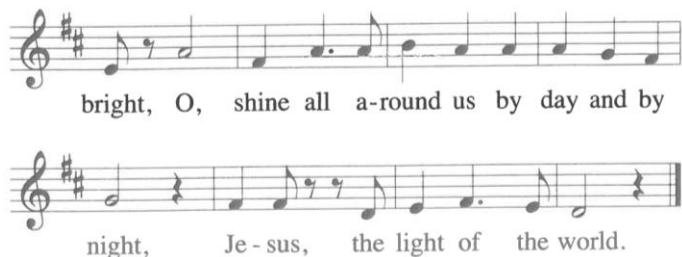
Prayer at the Wreath

Holy One, we have been waiting expectantly, trusting that you've been present, active and constantly at work. As we light all the Advent candles around the wreath and the Christ Candle in the center now, we ask for a deeper faith and the ability to watch and wait for you ~ and to put our commitments into action at any given moment. We are becoming fruits of hope from your hope, peace from your peace, joy from your joy and love from your love. Amen.

Response *Jesus, the Light of the World*

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the response, and the second staff contains the melody for the second line. The lyrics are written below the notes.

We'll walk in the light, beau-ti - ful
light, come, where the dew-drops of mer-cy shine



Children’s Message Children return to sit with their families. The Nursery is not staffed tonight, but it is open if anyone needs a break.

Blessing the Children (Tune: *Away in a Manger*)

**Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
And teach us, dear Jesus, to laugh and to share.**

Mission Moment 2nd Mile Advent/Christmas
Emmaus Homes | Circle of Concern | The Christmas Fund

Invitation to Generosity



Offertory Anthem *All Is Well*—Michael W. Smith & Wayne Kirkpatrick,
arr. by John Leavitt

All is well. All is well. Angels and all rejoice.
For tonight darkness fell into the dawn of Love’s light.
Sing Alle, sing Alleluia!

All is well. All is well. Let there be peace on earth.
Christ is come, go and tell, that He is in the manger
Sing Alle, sing Alleluia!

All is well. All is well. Lift up your voice and sing.
Born is now Emmanuel. Born is our Lord and Savior.
Sing Alleluia, sing Alleluia! All is well.

Alleluia!

Prayer of Dedication based on the words of Norman Wesley Brooks
**Holy One, Christmas is forever - not for just one day. For loving,
sharing, giving, are not to be put away. We root ourselves in your
transforming gifts that we will be gift givers all year long.
We commit ourselves anew to speaking and acting in ways that
bring more hope, peace, joy and love into the world. Amen.**

Carol *O Little Town of Bethlehem #44*

**O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

**For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.**

**O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth.**

**How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
Where mees souls will receive Him, still the dear Christ enters in.**

**O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Emmanuel!**

Hebrew Scripture Lesson Isaiah 9, selected verses

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Parent, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Christmas Gospel Luke 2:1-20

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favors!” When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Carol *What Child is This?* #53

**What Child is this, who laid to rest, on Mary’s lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
While shepherds watch are keeping?**

Refrain: **This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring Him laud the Babe, the Son of Mary!**

**Why lies He in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.**
(Refrain)

**So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh;
Come, one and all, to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings; Let loving hearts enthrone Him.**
(Refrain)

Meditation

Invitation to the Communion Table

We celebrate an “open table.” All are invited to participate! There’s plenty of room at this table.

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.]

Sharing the Presence of Christ

Please come forward in the center aisle to receive the bread and wine. Gluten-free wafers are available on the table. Grape juice is in the outer ring; wine is in the center. Please return by the side aisles. If it is more comfortable for you to remain seated, an usher will bring this simple sacred meal to you.

Communion Interlude *Away in a Manger*—1st tune by J. E. Spilman/2nd tune by John R. Murray/Lullaby by Johannes Brahms/all arr. by Fred Bock

***Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Holy One, may this simple sacred meal bring us closer to You and one another. Help us to feel Jesus' hope, peace, joy and love moving through our minds, bodies, spirits and relationships. We have witnessed this birth story again. Now we go in its tenderness and intensity. We commit to being gifts to one other - even to the stranger. The Spirit moves us toward one another. We are available, vulnerable, flexible. Melt us, mold us, fill us, use us. Amen.

***Sharing the Light of Christ**

Tilt only the candle being lit

***Congregational Carol** *Silent Night/Stille Nacht*

The first verse in German links us to our church's German founders.

*Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht! Alles schläft, einsam wacht
Nur das traute, hochheilige Paar. Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh', Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh'!*

**Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon virgin mother and child!
Holy Infant, so tender and mild. Sleep in heavenly peace.
Sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing: Alleluia.
Christ the Savior is born. Christ the Savior is born.**

**Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace. Jesus Lord, at Thy birth.
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.**

***Benediction**

***Postlude** *Organ Improvisation on "Antioch"—tune by G.F. Handel*

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice!—German Folk Tune, 14th c.

a song of mary

somewhere it being yesterday.
i a maiden in my mother's house.
the animals silent outside.
is morning.
princes sitting on thrones in the east
studying the incomprehensible heavens.
joseph carving a table somewhere
in another place.
i watching my mother.
i smiling an ordinary smile.

+++

mary's dream

winged women was saying
"full of grace" and like.
was light beyond sun and words
of a name and a blessing.
winged women to only i.
i joined them, whispering
yes.

+ Lucille Clifton

I take so much delight in the silence
of the men in the Christmas story.

Zechariah can't speak.

Joseph doesn't speak.

While the words and emotions of Mary and Elizabeth
are unapologetically centered.

The sound of Advent
is the voice of women.

~unknown

2nd Mile Advent Giving

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 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 are grateful for your generosity.

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.

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.

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.

