





[www.parkwayucc.org](http://www.parkwayucc.org)

January 4, 2026

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## Limitless Love | Courageous Action | Spirited Inquiry

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### Purpose Statement

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

### Congregational Statement

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

## PARKWAY UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST

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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.

**A special welcome to our guest musician Barry Luedloff!**

**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.

## **Worship Serving Today**

**Scripture Reader** is Jackie Eiffert.

**Flowers** are given by those who donated poinsettias.

**Treats** are provided by the Bumgarner-Cameron Family.

If you would like to volunteer for any of these serving opportunities or join the corresponding group, please scan the QR code and click on the **Serving Opportunities Calendar**. Thanks!



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## **Mental Health Support**

988 (new nationwide 3-digit number similar to 911... call or text)

24/7 Crisis Hotline 800-273-8255 (TALK) | 800-SUICIDE: 800-784-2433

24/7 Missouri Department of Mental Health 800-811-4760

Text 741741 and someone will text right back...[www.crisistextline.org](http://www.crisistextline.org)

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

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://warmline.org/warmdir.html>

## **Birthdays**

1/5 Lillie Sableman

1/6 Bill Hilgeman

1/7 Marilyn McDougall

1/8 Thomas Degroote

1/9 Diane Brost

1/10 Thad Gwyn

## **Anniversaries**

1/6 Josh Farr & Emily Oehler Farr

1/10 Bill & Karen Nolte

# 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday *after* Christmas

Sunday, January 4, 2026 | 10:00am | Sanctuary & YouTube Live

**Prelude** A collection of assorted traditional seasonal carols

**Welcome** Let us know you are here!

**Meditation** Revelation is not about being right - it's about being willing to be changed. ~unknown

## Passing the Peace of Christ

“May the peace of Christ be with you.”

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

## Lighting of the Candles & Ringing of the Bell

### Welcome Song *Christ Be Our Light* (refrain)

Refrain

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the

Refrain

dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your

church gath - ered to - day.

1-4 G Last time G

### Scripture Matthew 2:1-12 | Common English Bible—CEB

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

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

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

Then Herod secretly called for the magi and found out from them the time when the star had first appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search carefully for the child. When you’ve found him, report to me so that I too may go and honor him.”

When they heard the king, they went; and look, the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stood over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. They entered the house and saw the child with Mary his mother. Falling to their knees, they honored him. Then they opened their treasure chests and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Because they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another road.

**\*Call to Worship**

One:	We gather as people who are searching - for meaning, for truth, for light.
Many:	<b>We come carrying questions, hope, and holy curiosity.</b>
One:	Long ago, seekers followed a star across borders and differences, trusting that God’s light was not confined to one place or people.
Many:	<b>Today, that same light still shines - in unexpected voices, in acts of justice, in courageous love.</b>
One:	Epiphany reminds us that God is revealed not only in the familiar, but in the foreign, the overlooked, and the new.
Many:	<b>So, we open our eyes, our hearts, and our lives.</b>
One:	Come, let us worship the God who keeps showing up - calling us to follow the light and become light for the world.
Many:	<b>We come ready to worship, ready to listen, ready to be changed.</b>
One:	We call upon the Spirit to help infuse us with light so we can be more like Jesus.
All:	<b>Let us worship our God together - Creator, Christ and Spirit.</b>

**Lighting of the Advent Candles and the Christ Candle**

**Questions at the Wreath**

Where have you seen *unexpected light* breaking through in your life or in the world recently?

What old maps, assumptions, or certainties might we need to release?

Where might we, like Herod, feel threatened by change that redistributes power?

What step of courage might God be asking of you in response to what has been revealed?



## \*Song We Three Kings of Orient Are



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



Bear - ing gifts we tra - verse a - far, Field and foun - tain,  
 Gold I bring to crown Him a - gain, King for ev - er,  
 In - cense owns a De - i - ty nigh; Prayer and prais - ing  
 Breathes a life of gath - er - ing gloom; Sor - rowing, sigh - ing,  
 King and God and Sac - ri - fice; Al - le - lu - ia,



moor and moun - tain, Fol - low - ing yon - der star.  
 ceas - ing nev - er O - ver us all to reign.  
 we are rais - ing, Wor - ship - ing God Most High.  
 bleed - ing, dy - ing, Sealed in the stone - cold tomb.  
 Al - le - lu - ia Sounds through the earth and skies.



*Refrain*  
 O star of won - der, star of night,



Star with roy - al beau - ty bright; West - ward lead - ing,



still pro - ceed - ing, Guide us to thy per - fect light!

## \*Opening Prayer

Loving God, you gave the world a sign - a star bright enough for everyone to see. Help us notice your light today: in children and elders, in questions and courage, in places we did not expect you to be. As we worship, may we learn to follow your light - alone and together. Amen.

## \*Response Spirit of the Living God

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

**Children's Time** For children under the age of 3, parents are invited to take them to Room 06 (upper level) where one of our teachers will meet them at the door. Children from age 3 to 5<sup>th</sup> grade will go to Room 12, and youth from 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade will go to Room 15. For children in Room 06, parents please pick them up after worship. Children and youth from age 3 thru high school will come back up with their teachers for Communion with all of us.

### **Blessing the Children** *This Little Light of Mine*

**This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!**

**Hide it under a bushel? No! I'm gonna let it shine...  
Don't let anyone blow it out! I'm gonna let it shine...**

### **Offering Our Gifts to God**



If you have an offering today, please place it in the plate on the stand next to the communion table before the end of the closing hymn. There are offering plates in the Gathering Space outside the sanctuary too. Thank you for your generosity.

[www.parkwayucc.org/giving](http://www.parkwayucc.org/giving)

**Offering Interlude** *We Three Kings* arranged by Fred Bock, based on hymn tune by John H. Hopkins Jr.

### **\*Response**

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

### **\*Prayer of Dedication**

**God of shining stars and surprising paths, we offer these gifts not as endings, but as beginnings. May what we give become light where shadows linger, hope where people have been forgotten, and courage where truth is costly. As the Magi followed a star beyond borders and expectations, use these offerings to move us beyond what is familiar - toward deeper love, wider welcome, and justice that shines for all your children. Bless what has been shared, and bless us as we continue the journey, learning to recognize Christ not only in brilliance and beauty, but in the vulnerable, the overlooked, and the everyday places where your light continually breaks through. Amen.**

**Scripture** Isaiah 60:1-6 | New Revised Standard Version—NRSV

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.

Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you...

A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

**Scripture** Matthew 2:1-12 | The Message—MSG

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Moment of Silent Reflection**

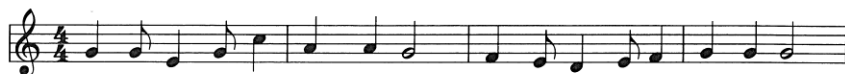
### **Sermon**

**Invitation to the Communion Table** We invite *all* to this **open table**.

All accepted - no exceptions - as we commit ourselves to limitless love, courageous action and spirited inquiry.



## Communion Song *Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ*



1 Let us tal - ents and tongues em - ploy, reach - ing out with a shout of joy:  
2 Christ is a - ble to make us one, at his ta - ble he set the tone,  
3 Je - sus calls us in, sends us out bear - ing fruit in a world of doubt,



bread is bro - ken, the wine is poured, Christ is spo - ken and seen and heard.  
teach - ing peo - ple to live to bless, love in word and in deed ex - press.  
gives us love to tell, bread to share: God (Im - man - u - el) ev - ery - where!

*Refrain (first time p, second time f)*



Je - sus lives a - gain, earth can breathe a - gain, pass the Word a - round: loaves a - bound!

## 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.]

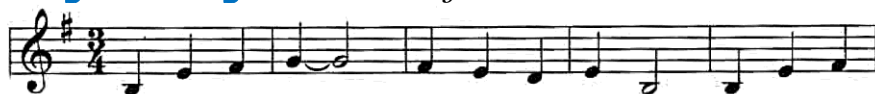
## \*Breaking Bread & Pouring Wine/Juice

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

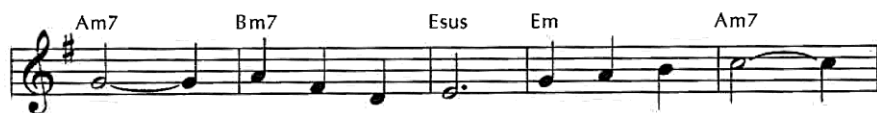
## \*Prayer of Thanksgiving

**Holy One, we thank you for this table where strangers become neighbors and ordinary bread becomes a sign of your boundless love. As the Magi followed the star, we, too, have been guided— not to certainty, but to wonder; not to power, but to vulnerability; not to answers, but to relationship. You have fed us with grace that refuses to stay contained. So, send us out, shining with borrowed light, to notice where your presence is breaking through - in voices long ignored, in truths newly revealed, in the courage it takes to choose a different road home. May this meal strengthen us to resist injustice, to welcome the stranger, to trust that revelation continues, and to follow your light even when it leads us beyond what is familiar. We go now, nourished and changed, ready to live what we have tasted: love that crosses borders, hope that disrupts fear, and justice that reflects your glory. Amen.**

## \*Song of Parting *Christ Be Our Light*



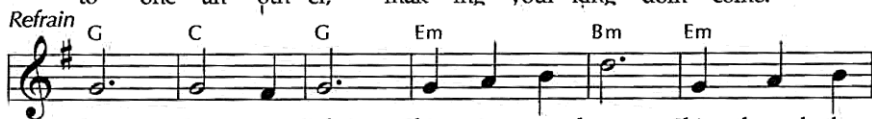
1 Long-ing for light, we wait in dark-ness. Long-ing for  
 2 Long-ing for peace, our world is trou-bled. Long-ing for  
 3 Long-ing for food, man - y are hun - gry. Long-ing for  
 4 Long-ing for shel - ter, man - y are home-less. Long-ing for  
 5 Man - y the gifts, man - y the peo - ple, man - y the



truth, we turn to you. Make us your own,  
 hope, man - y de - spair. Your word a - lone  
 wa - ter, man - y still thirst. Make us your bread,  
 warmth, man - y are cold. Make us your build - ing,  
 hearts that yearn to be - long. Let us be ser - vants



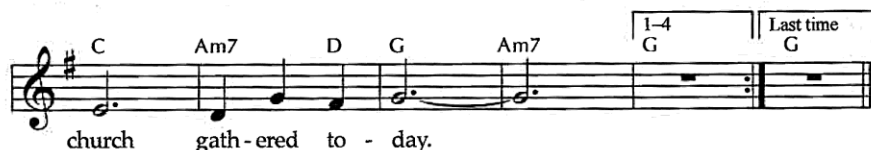
your ho - ly peo-ple, light for the world to see.  
 has power to save us. Make us your liv - ing voice.  
 bro - ken for oth-ers, shared un - til all are fed.  
 shel - ter - ing oth-ers, walls made of liv - ing stone.  
 to one an - oth - er, mak - ing your king - dom come.



Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the



dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your



church gath - ered to - day.

## \*Benediction

## \*God's Light Goes Forth

\*Music for Going Forth Improvisations on the traditional carol *Good King Wenceslas*

# Announcements

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

Our Communications Team is very active and is exploring all kinds of avenues. Please subscribe to our YouTube Channel today. Our YouTube Channel is [@parkwayuccsfl](#). There is a subscribe button under the main heading and brief description of our church. Thank you! Questions? Please contact [barbharris@charter.net](mailto:barbharris@charter.net) or [cynthianouri@gmail.com](mailto:cynthianouri@gmail.com)

## Tuesday Afternoon Dialogue on Zoom

1st & 3rd Tuesday | 1:45pm fellowship | 2:00-3:00pm discussion  
Zoom Link (312) 626-6799; Meeting ID: 836 7061 7428; Passcode: 480007  
Please join with TAD as we read and discuss *Tom Lake*, a novel by Ann Patchett, in 3 sessions on **January 6, 20, and February 3**. We'd love to have you! In the spring of 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Lara's three daughters return to the family's orchard in Northern Michigan. While picking cherries, they beg their mother to tell them the story of her life years before at a theater company called Tom Lake. As Lara recalls the past, her daughters examine their own lives and relationship with their mother and are forced to reconsider the world and everything they thought they knew. Fellowship starts at 1:45pm and the book discussion is from 2-3pm. For more info, please contact [jeiffert2@gmail.com](mailto:jeiffert2@gmail.com)

## AMOE Meeting Change of Date for January 2026

Thursday, January 8 | 9:15am | Heritage Room  
The boys of Adventurous Men Out Early will meet on the second Thursday of January, and then return to the first Thursday of each month. All are welcome. Bring a friend if you like for fellowship and good coffee. Questions? Please email Richard Scherrer at [90fivetpr@gmail.com](mailto:90fivetpr@gmail.com)

## Prayer Corner an opportunity to pray with someone

Saturday, January 10 | 7-9am | New Sanctuary  
Drop-in Prayer Time. Kevin will be in the Prayer Corner in the Sanctuary. Come on by if you'd like to pray together.  
If you see someone else there, simply wait a bit in the Gathering Space. We can arrange a phone call or Zoom for another time if you'd like. Just reach out to [kevin@parkwayucc.org](mailto:kevin@parkwayucc.org); 314-872-9330

## Coffee and Conversation at Panera

Monday, January 12 | 2pm | Panera on Manchester Road in Des Peres  
Join us for a beverage and sweet treat. Come connect!  
No need to RSVP - just show up!  
Questions? Contact [kevin@parkwayucc.org](mailto:kevin@parkwayucc.org); 314-872-9330

## Tuesday Evening Dialogue

2nd and 4th Tuesdays | 6-8pm | Heritage Room

Zoom Meeting ID: 849 4403 9731; Passcode: 792617

Please join us at TED for friendship and lively book discussions. Our next meeting is Tuesday **Jan 13** and we will be discussing the book *Lula Dean's Little Library of Banned Books* by Kirsten Miller. This novel will make you laugh out loud, but it also brings to life how much books can change how you think and look at life. The author works in pertinent issues of our times including censorship, racism, homophobia and misogyny among others. We will be covering the first 100 pages when we meet on **Jan 13**. We read a variety of books in TED related to social justice, spirituality, different faiths, history, relationships, current events and nature. Bring a dish to share for the potluck & join us for our next conversation! Newcomers are always welcome!

Please join us in person at 6pm or on Zoom starting at 6:45pm.

Contact Helen Race at [\*\*raceh@att.net\*\*](mailto:raceh@att.net) for questions.

## Intertwine Interfaith: Speed Faithing and Soup Slurping

Saturday, January 17 | Evening TBA | Shaare Emeth at Ballas and Ladue Rds

Please save the date for an interesting evening of delicious soups and meaningful conversation with our Jewish friends from Shaare Emeth Congregation and our Muslim friends from TASOM – the Turkish American Society of Missouri). We will have the opportunity to really intertwine as we engage in brief conversations around a variety of topics. This will be a very meaningful and memorable event that you don't want to miss!

For more info, contact Lisa Mason [\*\*lmason624@sbcglobal.net\*\*](mailto:lmason624@sbcglobal.net)

## Speaker Series Occasional opportunities after worship at 11:15am “Bletchley Park; the Home of WWII’s Codebreakers,” by Parks Smith.

Sunday, January 18 | 11:15am | Heritage Room

Bletchley Park, in England, was the top-secret home of the World War II "Codebreakers." a term for the over 9,000 men and women who intercepted and cracked German war messages. Winston Churchill referred to the Bletchley staff as "the geese who laid the golden eggs and never cackled." Our speakers, Parks Smith, is a retired St. Louisan historian, who often speaks at the St. Louis History Museum.

Mr. Smith will explore Bletchley Park's history from 1939 to 1946, sharing stories of those who worked there and detailing how German messages were captured and decoded during the Battle of the Atlantic. This mighty effort included breaking the German Enigma and Lorenz codes and developing the Colossus computer.

Questions? Please email Richard Scherrer at [\*\*90fivetpr@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:90fivetpr@gmail.com)

## Day of Service in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Monday, January 19 | 9:30am-12pm | 3752 Giles Ave., St. Louis, 63116

Youth 12-17 years of age are welcome to join Interfaith Partnerships Youth on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day to serve the unhoused. The youth will prepare a meal and set up cots/bedding for the unhoused. They will offer team and peace-building games as well. Space is limited and you must register by letting Kevin know you are interested. Kevin will be leading the youth from Pucc. Contact him at [kevin@parkwayucc.org](mailto:kevin@parkwayucc.org) for more info.

## Come Support Puccer Youth Zoe Lyons in Swix

Friday, January 23 | 6:30-8pm | Kirkwood High School

Come show your support for Puccer's very own Zoe as she stars in the student-led production of *Swix*. They'll be carpooling from the church at 6pm, but you're welcome to meet at the school. Ice Cream at Andy's afterwards!

Liz Lyons is leading this, so please RSVP with her at [lizardstifel@gmail.com](mailto:lizardstifel@gmail.com) to let her know you're coming! You can also click or scan the QR code.



## Go AWOL this Winter – Adventurous Women Out Late

Saturday, January 24 | 4pm | Heritage Room

Join other Pucc women for a crafty/snacky late afternoon! Pucc will provide an 18" wire heart frame and some craft items to peruse. Please bring other craft items to share: cloth, old clothes to cut up, felt, baubles, ribbons, fake flowers, or anything else you have cluttering up your house and you might picture on a heart wreath... and a glue gun if you have one!

\$10 donation requested for supplies when you sign up via One Church. Scan or click QR code to register.

Please bring an appetizer or finger food to share also!

(Stay afterwards for the ONA photo exhibit kick-off beginning at 7pm that same evening!)

Questions? Contact Carmen Bumgarner - [cfbum@charter.net](mailto:cfbum@charter.net)



## Authentic Selves: Celebrating Trans and Nonbinary People and Their Families

Saturday, January 24 | 7-8:30pm | Gathering Space

Join the Parkway ONA Team and the LGBTQ+ Faith Alliance in welcoming the Family Diversity Project's photo exhibit, "Authentic Selves," presented at Parkway UCC from Jan. 24 through Feb. 8. Opening night reception features guest Jordon Braxton, a longtime St. Louis advocate for trans rights and a member of the St. Louis City HIV Health Services Planning Council.

Refreshments will be served. A second opening will be from 9 to 10am with opportunity to view exhibit and enjoy a continental breakfast before Sunday worship. The exhibit will be on view through Feb 8. Please scan or click QR code to RSVP by Jan 23. For more info, contact Debbie Reinhardt [deborahreinhardt@att.net](mailto:deborahreinhardt@att.net)





## Witnessing Whiteness PUCC Study Group begins in January

We're forming a *Witnessing Whiteness* learning circle using Shelly Tochluk's book *Witnessing Whiteness: The Journey into Racial Awareness and Antiracist Action* as our framework. This approach was created here in St Louis through the YWCA and become timelier and more necessary after Michael Brown was killed over ten years ago.

It's a supportive, no-shame space where white-identifying people can explore identity, grow in self-awareness, and practice showing up with more courage, compassion, and clarity in our diverse and hurting world. White people need to learn what black, indigenous and people of color already know about their history and the systems that effect then every day in America.

No expertise is needed - just curiosity and a willingness to reflect in community. This will take place on Zoom - Mondays 6:30-8:30pm - so it doesn't matter where you live or if you travel.

There are examples of racist, xenophobic and deeply rooted prejudice in the news every day. Unfortunately, some of the most powerful people in our land are attempting to rewrite our nation's racial history and are continuing to create and sustain systems of bias. We cannot allow this to happen. This is not what love does.

[Please see an example of this in the eNews in a rebuttal to JD Vance after he encouraged an audience to ignore conversations about race. This is one of the reasons why we white people must engage in the work of being antiracists.]

We have the right and duty to do what we can to understand the roots of this behavior and to be very intentional about being as antiracist as we can be. Our faith calls us to rise to this opportunity and responsibility. This group will help you find critical insights and guide you into being a more aware and justice minded/hearted person.

If you're looking for a space to deepen your understanding, build stronger relationships, and align your actions with your values, we'd love to have you. *This experience is free.* We just ask that you purchase the book – let us know if you need help with that. More guidance will be provided by our three trained volunteer facilitators that have been assigned to shepherd our group.

**Sessions:** Jan 26; Feb 2, 9, 23; Mar 2, 9, 23, 30; Apr 6, 13, 20, 27; May 4, 11.

This is a big commitment that I believe is worth every moment in our efforts toward the common good.

We invite you to engage in this unique opportunity that supports our core values of limitless love, courageous action and spirited inquiry. The purpose of this group is to gain thought-provoking information and engage in meaningful conversations surrounding how White people can, and should, play an important role in the fight for racial justice.

I have participated in a *Witnessing Whiteness Group* in the past and will not be a part of this one. Please reach out to me with any questions or to sign up - **- kevin@parkwayucc.org**

Thank you for giving this serious consideration for the new year.

## Opportunities for Good Samaritans

**North St. Louis Tornado Relief, food.** Please add extra nonperishable food items on Give-a-Meal Sundays and throughout the winter season for Sunday give-aways to people affected by the St. Louis tornado. Please place items in marked containers in the lobby.

**North St. Louis Tornado Relief, nonfood.** Our church is a collection point for Planned Parenthood as they gather baby and personal hygiene items for mothers and babies affected by the St. Louis tornado. Please place items in the marked containers in the Gathering Space library area.

Questions? Please contact Sally Dodge [s.dodge@hotmail.com](mailto:s.dodge@hotmail.com); and Evelyn Buretta [burettaevelyn@gmail.com](mailto:burettaevelyn@gmail.com)

## Rooted in Faith and Justice: Christian Calls to Conscience & Cries for Peace in Palestine

Thursdays, starting February 5 | 6pm | Zoom

In the December, the Church Council adopted a motion to the affirmation of certain principles from the General Synod 35 Resolution “Declaration for an End to Genocide in Palestine.” We *affirm* that all are made in God’s image and are deserving of life free from oppression, persecution, and violence. We *reject* any theology or ideology including Christian Zionism, Supercessionism, antisemitism, anti-Arab, anti-Palestinian, or anti-Islam bias that would privilege or exclude any one nation, race, culture or religion within God’s universal economy of grace.

Parkway United Church of Christ is encouraged to receive this Resolution as a prophetic call and commit to: Stand in solidarity with oppressed people, domestic and abroad, and to denounce any atrocities whether that be through the context of public witness, legislative advocacy, legal action, or non-violent direct action; and denounce hate and violence in all its forms including that rooted in Islamophobia, anti-Palestinian and anti-Arab bias, and antisemitism, as contrary to the teachings of Jesus and the love of God for all humanity.

In an effort to live into this, we’ll be offering a five-week reading club of *Rooted in Faith and Justice* over Zoom. The book offers a powerful and enlightening perspective through the eyes of Palestinian Christian leaders and thinkers, helping us to understand the complexities and injustices of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Each week, we’ll cover a different section, starting with section 1. Click or scan QR code to get a copy. For more info, contact Gabriel Requadt [gabriel@parkwayucc.org](mailto:gabriel@parkwayucc.org)



# Prayer List

Wednesday, December 31, 2025

## Celebrations

**The 12 Days of Christmas.... The New Year.**

**Greenly Alexis Svenson** - new granddaughter for Ellie Svenson.

**Kate Moran** - experimental treatments are helping (Borgmann).

## Concerns

**Individuals and families grieving at the holidays** - including the Hoxie Kaplan family as they give thanks for Mildred Hoxie.

**Pam Walker** - healing after recent surgery.

**Greg Schmelig's father** -strengthening after hospital and rehab ctr.

**Traci Saputo's dad** - broken hip and other issues (Litzinger).

**Jeff Wentworth** - nearing the end of his life; hospice care (Grove).

**Senobia and Joe Martin** - grieving their daughter; Joe is ill (Grove).

**Ongoing chaos/grief in the Middle East.**

**The continuing war with Ukraine and Russia.**

**Our St Louis neighbors finding their way after tornado in May.**

## Continuing

**Alex Wiseman** - seeking diagnosis/treatment for health concern.

**Rebecca** - continued healing after recent brain surgery (Bowermaster).

**Virginia Krus** - healing after leg amputation (Evelyn Buretta's sister).

**Phil and Amy and daughter B** - as his terminal illness progresses.

**Lori Connors** - healing and strengthening.

**Karla Beck** - as her family seeks peace and her brother receives care.

**Tina** - complications of Legionaries' disease (Jones-Goldstein).

**Carole Gwyn** - ongoing health issues (David's mother).

**Judy Brueggemann** - continuing health challenges (Brad's mother).

**Mark McKenzie** - for healing, clarity, refreshment (Tom's brother).

**Emi** - 5 year-old with Children's Hospital for chemo (McConnell).

**Kathy** - diagnosed with lymphoma, preparing for surgery (Akers).

**Ron Mudica** - receiving hospice care; stage 4 cancer (Akers).

**Derek** - dying from alcoholism; grace for his father David (Akers).

**Kenton & Teal Blacksten** - K's many health challenges due to diabetes

**John Ruiz's oldest brother and wife** - healing in Cape Girardeau.

**John & Nancy Tallyn** - his heart condition; her recurring leukemia.

**Renee Pellegrino & family** - as she deals with multiple health issues.

**Danny Venverlo** - awaiting a kidney transplant (McDougall).

**Pam and David** - divorcing after 55 years of marriage (Akers).

**Craig Hoffman** - career Navy officer receiving hospice care (Svenson).

**Haack's doctor and his wife Christine** - her ongoing health crisis.

**Rebecca Ray** - that her book on suicide prevention will be published.

**Bill & Nancy Darland** - his ongoing health issues.

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

## Home-Centered/Care Facility/Rehab Center

**Lewis Junior Burcham** - *The Glenwood*; 1635 N. Baltimore Ave #25; Mt. Zion, IL 62549; 217-864-1757 [birthday: January 15]

**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]

**Pat Owens** - *Mason Pointe* - 13190 South Outer Forty Rd, #2303;

Town and Country, MO 63017; 314-323-7194 [birthdate: February 18]

**Ruth Peace** - 10379-D Forest Brooke Ln; StL MO 63146; 314-983-025  
meadletter22@gmail.com [birthdate: August 8]

**Naomi Runtz** - 272 N Lindbergh Blvd; StL MO 63141; 314-993-0469  
naomiruntz@sbcglobal.net [birthdate: August 30]

**Gladys Sims** - *Friendship Village - 15200 Village View Dr, #2418*;  
Chesterfield, MO 63017; 636-898-8873 [birthdate: July 4]

**Ellie Svenson** - *Mason Pointe* - 13190 South Outer Forty Rd, #2213;  
Town and Country, MO 63017; 314-323-7194 [birthdate: June 19]

**Judy Waddell** - 13510 Weston Park Dr; STL, MO 63131; 314-369-4885  
[birthdate: August 13]

## Other

**Pres Trump, VP Vance, Congress**, all local, national, world leaders.

**Our trans siblings** as they deal with harmful state/federal policy plans.

**All who depend on USAID programs** that have been eliminated.

**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.

**Prayer Chaplain Ministry here at Parkway UCC.**

\* **Mona Herberg** has completed her time with us after many years at PUCC. She was our full-time office administrator beginning in 2010 and was most recently handling our website and graphic design. She has been working from home for the last few years. If you would like to send her a warm note of gratitude and blessing, please ask **kevin@parkwayucc.org** for her address. Thank you.

## Drivers Needed

From time to time, PUCCers are in need of rides to medical appts when their usual circle of support is unavailable. Some in our church family also need help getting to worship. Please let [kevin@parkwayucc.org](mailto:kevin@parkwayucc.org) know you are willing to help. You will be added to the list of potential drivers and will receive an email once we have a request for a ride.



## **FUNDrive Planned for January-March 2026 Clean out your closets & cupboards -- Help TWO GOOD CAUSES!**

Parkway United Church of Christ is sponsoring a FUNDrive for two organizations in our church: the Eco-Stewards, with funds going toward maintaining and improving the Wildflower Pollinator Garden and the Youth Group, with funds going toward their mission trips. We have bags and packing instruction available in the Gathering Space and will start collecting bags of clothing and household textiles, as well as boxes of small household goods, books, and media **TODAY**. The drive will continue through **March 7**. Start thinking now about what you can donate to support these causes and streamline your home to start the New Year! Drop off bags and boxes in the Fellowship Hall, to your right, when you walk in. Questions-contact Polly Rutherford, **[pollyrutherford@gmail.com](mailto:pollyrutherford@gmail.com)**

[Some have asked about donating furniture. This drive does not include furniture, so contact *Home Sweet Home* - <https://homesweethomestl.org/>]

## **Stewardship Campaign 2026**

If you would like to make a financial pledge toward our mission and ministry for 2026, please visit **<https://parkwayucc.org/giving/>**  
*Your involvement helps keep our passion for limitless love, courageous action and spirited inquiry rooted in love and moving forward. We so appreciate your support! Parkway UCC strives to be an inclusive community embracing spiritual nourishment, open-mined inquiry, courageous action and interfaith partnerships to fulfill God's call to create a just world for all.*





## ***Rested and Ready***

Chris Mereschuk

*[Jesus said to them,] “Beware, keep alert, for you don’t know when the time will come. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.” - Mark 13:33, 37 (NRSVUE)*

Against my better judgement, there I was: downtown on New Year’s Eve in 1999, joining the countdown when I should’ve been in a bunker. “10, 9, 8...” Just several more seconds until ... something? Surely existence itself set its clock to Eastern Standard Time, and the stroke of midnight would usher in the End of History. “3, 2, 1...” Nothing. Y2K came and went. The countdown was a letdown after such a buildup.

What did we think would happen at such an arbitrary time? It seems kind of silly now. And yet there are those who remain alert and hyper-vigilant, prepared for the worst. Calendar coincidences, astronomical and astrological events, wars and rumors of wars lead us to calculate apocalyptic dates. But we can never know when the time will come.

Constant vigilance is exhausting and counterproductive. And being caught unaware and unprepared is a risk. Our reality is less about a divinely ordered end time and more about human-caused existential threats. We can’t close our eyes to these things, yet injustice-induced insomnia leaves us too depleted to respond when the moment arrives. So how can we be rested and ready?

What if rather than keeping awake, we kept prepared and connected? Instead of stockpiling canned goods, let’s stockpile our communities with mutual care. Some will keep awake while we rest, and rest while we keep awake, trusting that all will be prepared when the moment calls.

And for this, there is no mysterious future date—because the time is now.

### ***Prayer:***

*Call us into connection and community so that we are rested and ready for a time such as this. Amen.*

Consider signing up to receive these UCC daily devotions  
from our God is Still Speaking writers:

**<https://www.ucc.org/daily-devotional/>**



## **TODAY in Sunday School**

John the Baptist confirms that he is not the light when he says that he is neither the Messiah nor Elijah nor a prophet (John 1:19-34). Jesus' first disciples follow him (John 1:35-51).

### **THE POINT**

**As disciples, we follow Jesus, the Lamb of God**

### **BIBLE NUTS & BOLTS**

In Roman culture, a gospel (lit. good news) was an announcement that honored emperors by calling their birthdays and arrivals in cities "good news." In the New Testament, writers used the word to apply instead to the birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. A gospel is a little like a spiritual biography that contains words of hope that have the power to transform the lives of the hearers. There are four Gospels in the Bible: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The history, letters, and apocalyptic writings that make up the rest of the New Testament are all grounded in the testimony of these Gospel narratives.

### **STORY SUMMARY**

People asked John the Baptist if he was the Messiah. He said that he was not, but he was preparing the way for the Messiah through a baptism with water. John saw Jesus and proclaimed him to be the Lamb of God, and some of John's disciples began to follow Jesus. In Galilee, Jesus called Philip to follow, and Philip invited Nathanael to come and see the Messiah. Jesus' remarks convinced Nathanael that Jesus was the Son of God.

### **PRACTICE: Prayer**

In today's story, we hear about those who chose to "come and see," follow Jesus, and learn from his life. We cannot see Jesus in the same way, but we can still follow Jesus by reflecting on his words and stories in Scripture and communicating with him today through prayer. Find a place in or near your home where you can silently walk and pray.

## **NEXT WEEK in Sunday School**

Jesus' public ministry begins with a miracle at a wedding in Cana. When the wine runs out, Jesus transforms water into wine, providing more than enough for the needs of the feast (John 2:1-11).

**Want to go deeper with the lesson and learn more about what our Children and Youth are up to? Scan or click the QR code!**

