

Parkway Courier

Volume 53, No. 12

December 2018

Does God Enjoy Us? by Pastor Kathy Itzin

The other day, I was noticing how people dress in 'Fall colors,' which tend to match the colored leaves. We do the same thing in the Spring, wearing pastel greens, yellows, and other light colors that symbolize new life. I love that people in this area of the world try to 'match' what nature is doing around them! I imagined what this would look like from God's perspective, and found myself thinking, "God must think we're adorable!"

Does God really feel that way? I look at everything going on around the world and wonder how God could feel so positively towards humanity now. But then, I realized that even though the situation in the United States was significantly different a few years ago, we were still all the same people. Did God love us more then? Is God less enamored with us now?

I was surprised during a meeting with the N. Minneapolis ministers, when one of them said that percentage wise, there are far less killings and violent crimes in the world than in the past. A second minister agreed. In fact, this is true. Max Roser, a German researcher and economist from the University of Oxford has published these findings. You can find them at www.ourworldindata.org. But that's almost beside the point. God is enamored with us anyway.

How can this be? When we see all the suffering in the world, how can God be 'in love' with us? God's love doesn't depend upon how we behave. God delights in the good, the beauty, and the passion of who we are regardless of the circumstances surrounding us. Our essence, our soul, is part of the Spirit of God, and God delights in that. We share God's DNA on a personal level!

What if God didn't become human to 'save' us? What if God became human because God wanted to be human? What would this say about humanity? About the goodness of creation? About us? Maybe it was all so good that God wanted to 'try us on for size.'

The beginning of John 3 keeps running through my mind. "For God so loved the world..." "For God so **LOVED** the world..." God did love it, and God loves it now, with a passion that only deepens with time. God loves creation so much that God joined our humanity long ago, and God still is part of us today. God loves the world, and God loves us. Merry Christmas!

Pastor Kathy



December Scriptures

December 2 1st Sunday of Advent

1 Thessalonians 3: 9-13 (How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you?)

Luke 21: 25-36 (There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars...when you see these things taking place, you know that the Kingdom of God is near.)

December 9 2nd Sunday of Advent (Bell Sunday)

Luke 1: 68-79 (Blessed be God...for he has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David.)

Luke 3: 1-6 (The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord..')

December 16 3rd Sunday of Advent (Choir Program)

Phil. 4: 4-7 (Rejoice in the Lord always...Let your gentleness be known to everyone.)

Luke 3: 7-18 (John baptizes and teaches the crowds what true faithfulness entails, but let them know the one to come 'will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.'")

December 23 4th Sunday of Advent (Mary Sunday with Bells)

Micah 5: 2-5a (But you, O Bethlehem...from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.)

Luke 1: 39-55 (In those days Mary set out and went with haste...and greeted Elizabeth...And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior...')

December 24 Christmas Eve. (4:00 Parkway & 10:00 pm Robbinsdale)

Isaiah 9: 2-7 (The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them a light has shone.)

Luke 2: 1-20 (The birth of Jesus.)

Christmas Day (10:00 Robbinsdale UCC)

Luke 2: 1-20 (The birth of Jesus.)

December 30 Lessons and Carols

Colossians 3: 12-17 (As God's holy and beloved ones, clothe yourselves with compassion and kindness.)

Luke 2: 41-52 (Jesus and his parents go to Jerusalem, Jesus stays in the temple when they return.)



Out to Lunch Bunch

The Out to Lunch Bunch will gather at Kay and Jim Leerssen's house on December 13 for a Christmas lunch. Their address is 7517 Edgewood Ave. N., Brooklyn Park 55428. Kay and Jim will provide all the lunch fixins', but ask guests to please bring a dessert to share. Please call the week before and let them you will be coming. 763-561-2018.

The Sharing Tree

by Ann Jarvimaki for the Board of Community Outreach



What's a tree without toys? Parkway will collect toys for the pediatrics unit at North Memorial Hospital. These toys will be used at Christmas and the rest of the year as well. Children and youth up to 16 years old may be in this area. It's easy to purchase things for the younger children, but please don't forget the teenagers. The last day to bring toys for the Sharing Tree is December 16.



A BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

A service of Remembrance and Hope for those for whom Christmas is not an easy time.
We will have a shared service at Robbinsdale UCC on Sunday, December 9 at 7:00 p.m.
Pastors Kathy and T. Michael will be leading the service.



The Mitten Tree

Board of Community Outreach

It's that time of year again. The weather is going to get cold(er) and the snow will eventually fall. The mitten tree will be up in the narthex during the Advent season and we would like to see it decorated with hats, mittens, gloves and scarves for those at Haven House/St. Anne's Place, which houses approximately 170 women and 300 youth throughout the year.

Parkway United Church of Christ
3120 Washburn Ave. N. Minneapolis, MN 55411
(across Theo Wirth Parkway from North Memorial Hospital)

NOEL AT NOON

Wednesday, December 5 and 12, 2018

Lunch time: 11:30 a.m. to 11:55 a.m.
Concert: 12 noon to 12:30 p.m.

suggested donation for lunch is \$6.00
a free-will offering plate will be in the narthex

Spend your noontime with us for **NOEL AT NOON** and enjoy two wonderful Christmas concerts, as well as a delicious lunch.

Parkway music director Bonnie McClain has planned programs that will regale you with a variety of sacred and secular Christmas music. By the time you leave, you'll be full of the spirit of the season!

Lunch will be served in Fellowship Hall starting at 11:30 a.m., and the concert will start promptly at 12 noon in the sanctuary. (If you have people who need a little longer to eat, feel free to come at 11:15 a.m.)

Mark your calendars, invite your friends and join us for this memorable Christmas gift!

Programs: December 5

Christmas on the Ivories! (piano and organ ivories)

Hear Dan Ritter and Trygve Larsen, both amazingly talented musicians, play music of the season on Parkway's wonderful piano and pipe organ. Whether you laugh or get a little teary, this will be a gorgeous program of holiday music.

December 12

Pistachio Singers, directed by Dan Ritter

Who doesn't love pistachios, especially when it's the Pistachio Singers? These women love to sing, and it shows! Dan Ritter will lead them in a program full of Christmas joy and beauty. Their fun is infectious, and you are sure to love it!

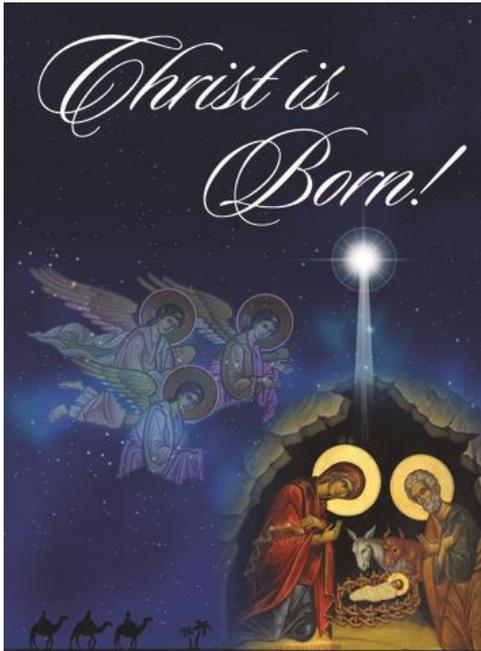
For more information, please call the church at 612-522-2982.
Parkway UCC is fully handicap accessible.

HODIE!

by Z. Randall Stroope

Sunday, December 16, 2018

10:00 a.m.



Under the direction of Parkway Music Director Bonnie McClain, the Chancel Choir will present this exciting and joyous work. The choir will be accompanied by a brass ensemble, percussion instruments and Dan Ritter on the organ.

HODIE!, the title of the work, is Latin for "today" or "this day" and is pronounced *o-dee-ay*.

Composer Z. Randall Stroope is the head of the choral music department at the University of Nebraska in Omaha and has won many awards for his compositions. Sung mostly in Latin, the work ends with the beautiful and familiar chorus *Wachet auf*: "Wake, awake for night is flying, all the watchers on the heights are crying. Awake Jerusalem, arise. Therefore will we, eternally, sing hymns of joy and praise to Thee." ALLELUIA!

Be sure to join us for this uplifting celebration of Christ's birth--it's joyous, mysterious and triumphant!

Reverse Advent Calendar



An Advent Calendar counts down the days until Christmas from the 1st of December until Christmas Day. You get to open a little door on the calendar every day to reveal a gift inside. That gift may be chocolates, Christmas tree ornaments, trinkets, or other presents.

This year the Board of Community Outreach is doing a **Reverse Advent Calendar**. Each day you ADD an item to a box and on Christmas Eve you donate the contents to a Charity. The Board of Community Outreach will suggest the Charities. Watch for ideas for the **Reverse Advent Calendar** on Parkway's bulletin board.

The United Church of Christ Christmas Fund

The light of God surrounds us,
The love of God enfolds us,
The power of God protects us,
The presence of God watches over us.
-James Dillet Freeman

The theme of the 2018 UCC Christmas Fund Offering is ***The Light is Surely Coming.***

For over a century the Christmas Fund for the veterans of the cross and the Emergency Fund has been a tangible expression of God's love and light in the world. Year after year UCC members and congregations have reached out in kindness, compassion and gratitude to those who have faithfully shepherded our church in the past and who now find themselves facing unexpected financial needs.

The recipients of your gifts are persons who have faithfully served the church for many years. And now, in their time of need, you can be the church to them.

On behalf of the hundreds of clergy, lay employees, and their families who lives will be touched by your support of the Christmas Fund offering. Thank You, please give generously.

News of the Boards

Board of Community Outreach – St. Anne's and Ascension have merged into one organization. It's now called Haven Housing. Nancy Larson visited the main office. Carol Anderson will lead the Thanksgiving Dinner food purchasing for St. Anne's Place. The Walters made a sock delivery to Lucy Craft Laney School. They have enough socks for now, so we'll collect again next fall. The board is

November Coffee Hour: Families Moving Forward

November Drivers	Flowers
4 Dave Hendel	4 Open
11 Char Merz	11 Open
18 Dave Hendel	18 Open
25 Char Merz	25 Open

E-mail address: parkwayucc@gmail.com

Rev. Kathy's e-mail: parkwayuccpastor@gmail.com

Web Site: www.parkwayucc.com

Parkway Courier

Charlene Merz, Editor

The deadline for the November Courier is November 21.

Please bring your articles to the church office or email them to Parkwayucc@gmail.com

All articles are appreciated!

Board of Property: Jim Jarvimaki reported that the roof repair company came to do the repairs, but found one of the metal pieces was missing. They will replace that. The cost of the repair was less than expected. Dave Hendel will purchase a case of light bulbs from the store he works at since he

can get them a little chepaer with his discount. Jim has the fall clean-up company scheduled and they will probably come twice for the leaf clean-up. The new flags are up on the front of the church and they look great.

Council

Met on October 18. Please see the above reports.

New business: Emily Braun reported that we will have a Silent Auction on November 11 (Stewardship Sunday) after the service. Emily and Char will set the items up on the afternoon of November 10 and will have a wine (approved by Council) and cheese reception that evening for people to come and preview and place early bids.

Minister's Report: Kathy submitted a written report covering her activities for October. We have two new members joining on November 4. She visited Lu Butler who was in the hospital and then went to a rehab center in Lake Elmo. She visited Eunice Shore and Frank Gaines. She has attended many meetings at Parkway as well as the UCC Clergy Convocation in Buffalo. We had World Communion Sunday where we had many different types of bread from various countries. She is working on the Stewardship letter which will go out on November 1.



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|----|----------------|----|------------------|
| 2 | Dianne Boerger | 21 | Carol Bulchuck |
| 2 | Tom Malaske | 28 | Don Oney |
| 7 | Connie Wolff | 28 | Harriet Thompson |
| 15 | Jim Jarvimaki | 29 | Vicky Shaffer |

HAPPY/THANKFUL OFFERINGS

We are offering this gift because we are happy and/or thankful for:

October 7, 2018

All the interesting stories and poems writers contributed to the summer Courier.

Great Work!

-Jodie Walters

A BIG thank you for the storage closet clean out. Looking good.

Hope it stays that way.

-Carol Bulchuck

October 14, 2018

Friends who picked me up today. Dick and Nancy Larson.

-Margaret Heglund

For my new great grandson born to Emily and Mike Howe. Brenda Magnuson, Daughter.

-Barbara Kinnunen

I am thankful for the new transition in life. I am very thankful for my whole entire family and all my friends. Thank you all for the support.

-Travis Bloomquist

Pam and Paul are engaged!

Dave and Carolyn & Cindy Haughey

Please Remember in Your Prayers

Gerry Hartley
Rose Marie Lund – (Durand's daughter)
Jim & Kay Leerssen
Marlene Mars
Harriet Thompson
Parkway Church
Eunice Shore
Brett Sprague
Laura Mylan - (Friend of Janet Zahn)
Jan Schwarz
Sheryl Griefe - (Friend of Dick and Nancy)
Bob Freeman - (Cancer surgery)
Bob Dooley - (Lu Senescall's son-in-law)
Lisa Flynn - (Carol Anderson's niece)
Chris Murphy - (Nephew of Tom and Kathy Malaske)
Maxine Rogers - (Lonnie Rose's sister)
Veralyn and Dennis Bash - (sister and brother-in-law of Lester Boerger)
Paul and Donita Boerger - (Lester Boerger's parents)
Sandy Thompson - (Bob and Evie Thompson's daughter-in-law)
Emil Makinen – (Jim Jarvimaki's brother-in-law)

Judy Oelkers - (Pat Durand's cousin)
Frank Gaines
Lu Butler
A.J. Houle - (Dick and Nancy Larson's son-in-law)
Terry Nolan
Kathy Malaske
James Karst
Tom Ley
Greg Lipelt - (Todd Lipelt's brother)
Ron Merz - (Greg Merz's father)
Armin Bulchuck
Bill Morrison
Ken & Avanelle Gaines
Jim & Margaret Heglund
Paula and her family
Erin Gaines - (Frank Gaine's daughter-in-law)

Parkway Courier

An Open and Affirming Church

3120 Washburn Avenue North

Minneapolis, MN 55411

Telephone: 612-522-2982

Fax Number: 612-522-1439

E-mail: parkwayucc@gmail.com

Worship Service: Sunday, 10 a.m.

Office Hours: 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Monday – Thursday

Rev. Kathy Itzin, Senior Minister

Charlene Merz, Administrative Assistant

Bonnie McClain, Director of Music

Daniel Ritter, Organist

Carolyn Hendel, Bell Choir Director

Molly Merz, Custodian

**Published by and for members and friends of
PARKWAY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

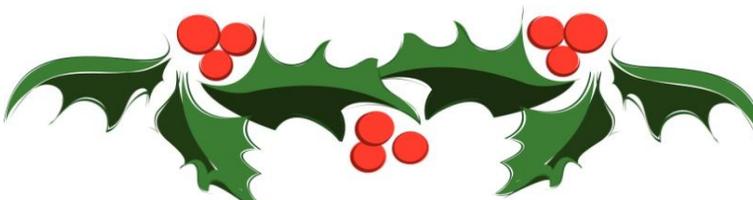




Parkway United Church of Christ

December 2018



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10 a.m. Worship 10:15 Sunday School 11 a.m. Coffee Hour 12:30 CWOW	7 p.m. Victory AA	10 a.m. Bible Study 10-11 a.m. Meeting in social hall	11:30 Lunch Noel at Noon 6 p.m. Bells 7 p.m. Choir Practice			
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
10 a.m. Worship 10:15 Sunday School 11 a.m. Coffee Hour 7 p.m. Blue Christmas	7 p.m. Victory AA	10 a.m. Bible Study	11:30 Lunch Noel at Noon 6 p.m. Bells 7 p.m. Choir Practice	12:00 Out to Lunch Bunch at Leerssen's		1-5 p.m. Birthday Party in Social hall
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
10 a.m. Worship 10:15 Sunday School Choir Concert 11 a.m. Coffee Hour	7 p.m. Victory AA	10 a.m. Bible Study	6 p.m. Bells 7 p.m. Choir Practice	7 p.m. Council		Toys 4 Tots in Social Hall
23/30	24/31	25	26	27	28	29
10 a.m. Worship 10:15 Sunday School 11 a.m. Coffee Hour 30th Carols & Readings	24th 4 p.m. Christmas Eve Service-Parkway 10 p.m. - Robbinsdale	Christmas Day	Church Office is closed			