



## Lent - What's the Point? by Pastor Kathy Itzin

We tend to think of Lent as an occasion for self-improvement, (sort of like New Year's, only without the fun)! Words like 'repentance,' and 'sin' are not very popular in the U.C.C.! That's a good thing, because we emphasize opportunities for growth, choosing more life, and making choices for the good of the community. We focus more on the positive, and less on the negative aspects of our faith.

I like that. I think of Jesus focusing always on the dignity and immeasurable worth of each person he encountered. I think of him never 'putting someone down,' but always building them up, and reminding them of their value in the eyes of God.

And yet, he called evil, 'evil.' When he saw the money changers cheating the poor in the very temple dedicated to God, he told them in no uncertain terms that he wouldn't stand for it. Peter knew the tension between the Romans and the Jews was at an all-time high at Passover, and something was going to explode. When he tried to persuade Jesus not to go to Jerusalem, Jesus looked at him and said, "Get behind me, Satan!" Jesus was focused on reality. He knew what he needed to do, and he spoke the truth without mincing words.

So, "Repent, and believe the Good News!" We get bound up in the "Repent" and seem to ignore the "Good News!" 'Repent' doesn't mean 'drag yourself around feeling sad about your shortcomings.' It means, "Turn around, and accept a new way of embracing life!" It means, "Accept a new orientation, an orientation towards God!"

What would that mean for us? It isn't necessarily giving up sweets or snacks or alcohol, (although those could be very life-giving choices). It means, "Look at God first, then see what you're called to do!" Pray! Think about God sometimes, before making choices, making statements, or choosing attitudes. Recall how much you are loved by God, and how much God loves everyone else.

That is the Good News! That's it, in a nutshell. We are loved immeasurably – and so is everyone else. Happy Lent!



# February Scriptures

## February 4 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany

**Isaiah 40: 21-31** (God is a great God, ..those who wait for God shall renew their strength, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint...)

**Mark 1: 29-39** (Jesus is overwhelmed with people needing cures, and he goes out by himself to pray)

## February 11 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany

**1 Corinthians 9: 24-27** (All runners in a race compete, but only one receives the prize. Run in such a way that you may win it)

**Mark 1: 40-45** (A leper asks Jesus for healing, "If he want's to" Jesus says, "Of course I want to!" and heals him)

## February 14, Ash Wednesday (Love of God, Love of Neighbor, the God Who Loves Us Tenderly)

**Deuteronomy 6: 4-9** (You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind)

**Isaiah 43: 1-7** (Do not fear, I have called you by your name and you are mine)

**Mark. 12: 28-31** (The greatest commandment)

## February 18 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent

**Genesis 9: 8-17** (The covenant between God and Noah)

**Mark 1: 9-15** (Immediately after his baptism, Jesus goes into the wilderness and is tempted. Then he goes into Galilee, proclaiming the Good News)

## February 25<sup>th</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent

**Genesis 17: 1-7, 15-16** (God makes a covenant with Abraham & Sarah, promising to make Sarah a mother to nations)

**Romans 4: 13-25** (Faith is more important than adherence to the Law)

**Mark 8: 31-38** (Jesus corrects Peter, saying to focus on the main thing, God's purpose, vs. what you want for now)



## Out to Lunch Bunch

The Out to Lunch Bunch will gather at Pub 42, 7600 42nd Ave. N. in New Hope on February 8 at 11:30 a.m. This is the site of the former Sunshine Factory. They have good food and many lunch specials to choose from. Please call the church and let us know you will be coming.

## Parkway Courier

Charlene Merz, Editor

The deadline for the March Courier is February 21.

Please bring your articles to the church office or email them to [Parkwayucc@gmail.com](mailto:Parkwayucc@gmail.com)

All articles are appreciated!

## Lent and 'The Three Great Loves'

The United Church of Christ has rolled out a new initiative for the next two years.

**The Three Great Loves: Love of Neighbor, Love of Children, and Love of Creation.** This is nothing new for the Christianity! Yet, focusing on the vulnerable sometimes gets lost when we emphasize putting our own needs (that of an individual, church, or nation) over that of others. The Scriptures are very clear that the measure of a person's faith is the extent to which they look out for those who are vulnerable. The vulnerable are under constant threat, and we are the ones to speak and act on their behalf. Children and Creation are two entities that need our protection, always, and we have the responsibility to look out for our vulnerable Neighbor as well. (For more, Google UCC.org 3GreatLoves)

All of this is a reflection of how we love God, and how we respond to God's love for us.

**On Ash Wednesday, (Valentines Day, February 14)** we will celebrate with a 7:00 service "The Tender Love of God."

Our Thursday evening soup supper/adult education presentations (6:15 soup, 7:00 program) will reflect these "Three Great Loves".

**On March 1, Jim Koon will present "SafeNights: Local Shelters for Homeless Students"** (Love for Children). This very needed program was presented to Council for our consideration, in participating as a church. Come and see!

**On March 8, Janet Brown of Climate Generation will talk about "Climate Change and Clean Energy."** Review the latest climate science, learn about clean energy solutions happening now, and explore what you can do to make a difference!

**On March 22, Danette Buskovich (previous Parkway member) will present 'Sex Trafficking in Minnesota.'** On January 19<sup>th</sup>, The Minneapolis Star Tribune stated, "The FBI has identified the Twin Cities as one of the nation's 13 largest centers for child prostitution." Danette works for the Hennepin County Office of Corrections and previously worked for the Office of Justice.

Join us for a soup and bread supper from 6:15 - 7:00 followed by the evening presentation from 7:00 - 8:00. We hope to see you here!

## Mardi Gras at Robbinsdale UCC



Parkway UCC, along with Union UCC from St. Louis Park are invited to celebrate Mardi Gras at Robbinsdale UCC from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 13. The ministers from all three churches will be making pancakes! Come and see them hard



at work, cooking. There will be storytelling from all and pancake races too! What are pancake races? Holding a pancake on a spatula and racing through an obstacle course while balancing that pancake the whole time. Seem easy? Come and show off your pancake racing skills! All are welcome and encouraged to bring toppings for the pancake feast. If you would like to come, but don't have a ride, let us know in the office and we'll make sure you get there. This is a fun opportunity to meet the other congregations and get to know the ministers too! We hope to see you there!

## Give Up 'Go The Extra Mile' for Lent!

Our 'Go The Extra Mile' campaign is hereby suspended for Lent! We will still let you know when the church needs something, (and we'll gratefully accept your donations), but we are giving up the bulletin board for Lent.

Go the Extra Mile has been hugely successful here for several years. We have nearly eliminated costs for material purchases from our church budget, and successfully relied upon our members to meet our needs. Everyone has 'stepped up' wonderfully!

The bulletin board, however, has gotten tired of advertising. It needs a new look. We've decided to give it a rest and begin again with a newer, fresher look after Easter. Thank you for your generous help, and stay tuned!



### **A Note of Thanks From Cassie Lewis and Jaylen**

Thank you to the Diaconate Board for hosting the baby shower for Jaylen and me. The lunch was delicious. Thank you to everyone who came and a special thank you to those who brought gifts. We received so many wonderful gifts, gift cards and money. Please know I will put everything to good use.

Thanks to everyone! It was a wonderful way to celebrate his 1 month birthday – and the Vikings won!

## **News of the Boards**

### **Board of Diaconate**

The board met on January 14. On January 21, Tom and Kathy Malaske will join the church.

The board will host Linger Lunch on January 28. Three different soups will be served along with a meat and cheese tray and corn bread. All will be invited to stay after lunch for cribbage.

Ash Wednesday service was discussed along with the Thursday Lenten programs. (See article)

### **Board of Finance**

The board met on January 17. The new finance program is up and running. Char was able to get all of the 2017 finances into this new program and presented the 2018 budget. Some minor changes were made regarding utilities and building and property maintenance. The board approved the budget.

The new giving and pledge system is also up and running. It has a few details that are getting worked out. Emily will have the updated end of year pledge statements ready for Sunday, January 28th.

### **Board of Community Outreach**

This board did not meet in January.

## Council

Council met on January 18. Emily reported that she has successfully printed the correct end of year pledge statements and will hand them out on Sunday, January 28.

Char presented the 2018 budget and the Council went through it line by line. The changes to the budget were discussed and it passed with an almost unanimous vote. The Congregational Budget Meeting is Sunday, January 21st.

We will host Families Moving Forward the week of February 11. The Jones's, who usually get the groceries will be away, so Char volunteered to get the groceries for this week.

Emily reported that there was a large gift of \$10,000 given to the church in December. The anonymous donors would like to see it used for something other than the budget. It has been left up to the Council how to put the gift to use.

Jim Jarvimaki reported that he replaced a broken outlet in the sanctuary. The plexiglass on the outdoor sign has come off and will be replaced. One of the glass windows in the social hall is cracked. Molly's company will provide the glass and Molly will install it.

Emily reported that the older windows in some of the rooms upstairs need new glazing. This is something that will have to be done in the summer. Maybe Molly's company can donate time to get some or all of them fixed. We will ask Molly.

Kathy visited Gerry Hartley, Frank Gaines, and the Silvernesses. Frank is falling a lot and has moved from assisted living to the the nursing home at North Ridge. Dick and Marilyn are happy and have a nice place. Gerry Hartley will have back surgery on February 9.

Patrick Liestman reported for the Board of Finance. At the next finance meeting, the board will be reviewing the stagnate accounts in the dedicated area and reallocating some of the funds. Pledges have been consistent and came in higher than expected. Frank Gaines can no longer serve on the board, so a name was brought up and Patrick will check with that person.

## Membership Dues

Each year, every UCC church pays membership dues to the Minnesota Conference Office. The cost is \$10 for every member. What is the money used for? It helps support local churches and ministers in times of change or challenge. It helps to cover expenses associated with resources and visits from Conference Ministers and Associate Ministers. It guarantees that all churches included in the Minnesota Conference have the support and help they need when and if they need it. We are encouraging the members of Parkway to donate the \$10 for themselves and any family members to help cover the cost of the dues the church pays to the Conference. If you send it in the mail, please identify it as "membership dues." Thank you!

### February Coffee Hour: Creative Worship

#### February Drivers                      Flowers

4 Dave Hendel	4 Open
11 Char Merz	11 Open
18 Char Merz	18 Open
25 Dave Hendel	25 Open

E-mail address: [parkwayucc@gmail.com](mailto:parkwayucc@gmail.com)

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On Sunday, January 28, Dianne Star led our worship service with music, scripture and an empowering sermon based on reality, facts, and knowledge of Mental Health and the UCC's continuation of welcoming and supporting everyone on their journey through life. In 1992 the Mental Health Network began with a grant from the American Missionary Association of the United Church of Christ. It began as a response to the need for families and others to communicate among themselves about their experiences as families and in congregations. The UCC's Mission for Mental Health is to work to reduce stigma and to promote the inclusion of people with mental illnesses and their families in the life, leadership and work of congregations.

The UCC envisions a future where:

- People with mental illnesses feel welcomed, supported, valued and included seamlessly in the life, leadership and work of their congregations.
- UCC congregations have eliminated stigma, and their members offer true compassion and support for people with mental illnesses and their families.
- UCC churches are collaborating with other faith communities to widen their welcome to people with mental illnesses.

How can you help? Here are 5 simple things you can do to make the world a better place for people with mental illnesses and their families.

**Be a friend.**

Provide companionship and compassion on the road toward recovery. Offer a ride to church or to a local support group. Listen without judgement. Pray for those you know with mental illnesses and for their family members.

**Be an inspiration.**

Share your story. Has mental illness impacted you or your family in some way? Your story may empower others to seek treatment or have hope.

**Watch your language.**

Pay attention to the words you use and avoid stigmatizing labels. Do not refer to people as "crazy," "psycho," "lunatic" or "mental."

**Be a "Stigmabuster."**

Challenge negative attitudes toward mental illness among your friends and acquaintances and in the media.

**Learn the facts.**

Educate yourself about the various mental illnesses. Attend a lecture or class or use the Internet. Good places to start include the National Alliance on Mental Illness, [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org), and the National Institute of Mental Health, [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov).

All people, regardless of mental health or disability status, have something to contribute to the life, leadership and work of their congregations. No matter where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here! Never place a period where God has placed a comma, for we know that 'God Is Still Speaking!'

## 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**  
**Karen Anderson**  
**Terri Lipelt** - (Todd's brother)  
**Jimmy Johnson** - (Sharon Chafin's cousin)  
**Lisa Flynn** - (Carol Anderson's niece)  
**Steven, Shawn and Jessie** - (Terri's family)  
**Veralyn and Dennis Bash** - (sister and brother-in-law of Lester Boerger)  
**Paul and Donita Boerger** - (Lester Boerger's parents)  
**Erin Gaines** - (Frank Gaine's daughter-in-law)  
**Sandy Thompson** - (Bob and Evie Thompson's daughter-in-law)

**Bob Freeman** - (Cancer surgery)  
**Donelle Arkley** - (Michael Snitker's sister)  
**Grace Ashley**-(Ro Shanklin's sister-in-law)  
**Maxine Rogers** - (Lonnie Rose's sister)  
**Pam Eckert** - (Friend of Dawn Stroschein)  
**Alan Johnston** - (Alice Johnston's son)  
**Judy Oelkers** - (Pat Durand's cousin)  
**Frank Gaines**  
**Lu Butler**  
**A.J. Houle** - (Dick and Nancy Larson's son-in-law)  
**Sheryl Griefe** - (Friend of Dick and Nancy)  
**Terry Nolan**  
**Jean Rossmar** - (David Goettsch's sister)  
**Carl Colburne** - (Jean Rossmar's partner)



2	Kaydin Berry	10	Victoria Morrison
2	Kevin Combs	12	Carolyn Sprague
2	Danny Mwesigwa	13	Pam Hendel
5	Rick Lerum	17	Graham Merz
9	Kevin Korell	17	Troy Ouellette
		25	Chloe Berry

## HAPPY/THANKFUL OFFERINGS

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

### January 7, 2018

Parkway opening your church for our family (Jane & Dale Eddy) memorial service. Thank you for being a home for the Norman Family.

- Tamara Bratland  
(Granddaughter of Katherine Norman)

### January 7, 2018

We are celebrating our 64th Wedding Anniversary on Tuesday, January 9!  
-Dick and Lancy Larson

*Happy Anniversary!*

### January 28, 2018

Dawn's Birthday tomorrow!  
-Marlene Mars

*Happy Birthday to you!*

## Parkway Courier

***An Open and Affirming Church***

Telephone: 612-522-2982

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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

## February 2018



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10:00 a.m. Worship 10:15 Sunday School 11:00 Coffee Hour 11:15 Bd Comm Out	7 p.m. Victory AA	10 a.m. Bible Study  6-9 p.m. Caucus	6 p.m. Bells 7 p.m. Choir Practice			
11	12	13	15	16	17	
10:00 a.m. Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour 11:15 Bd Diaconate FMF	7 p.m. Victory AA  FMF	10 a.m. Bible Study Mardi Gras at Robbinsdale UCC 5:30 FMF	Bd Finance 10:30 a.m. Ash Wednesday Service 7:00 p.m. FMF	7 p.m. Council  FMF	FMF	FMF
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
10:00 a.m. Worship 10:15 Sunday School 11:00 Coffee Hour 12:30 CWOW		10 a.m. Bible Study	6 p.m. Bells 7 p.m. Choir Practice  <i>Courier deadline</i>			
25	26	27	28			
10: a.m. Worship 10:15 Sunday School 11:00 Linger Lunch 12:30 CWOW	7 p.m. Victory AA	10 a.m. Bible Study	6 p.m. Bells 7 p.m. Choir Practice			