Kirkwood United Church of Christ

Our Welcoming Covenant
Kirkwood United Church of Christ is called by God to be an open, diverse and caring community of Jesus’ disciples. In following Christ’s commandment to love one another, we welcome all who wish to share in fellowship, membership, leadership, worship, ministry, sacraments, rites, responsibilities and blessings of our faith community. As we affirm every person is a child of God, no one is excluded, regardless of race, ethnic or socio-economic background, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, physical or mental ability, nationality or faith background. We are an Open and Affirming and an Immigrant Welcoming congregation. All are welcome here!

A Word from the Pastor – January 2020

“Every one of us has a WHY, a deep-seated purpose, cause or belief that is the source of our passion and inspiration.”
- Simon Sinek, Find Your Why

During the past few months I have regularly referenced the big ideas and wisdom of Simon Sinek, an author and leadership philosopher (my words) who has written books such as Start With Why and The Infinite Game. Simon Sinek consults primarily with corporate entities, and yet, his principles and wisdom are deeply spiritual. What he believes speaks to both my practical and spiritual self, and I know that is true of some of you, as well, as you’ve recounted to me reading his books.

It has been at least ten years since KUCC, as a body of Christ, has considered its purpose for being. Since I’ve served as your pastor, we have pondered how we are, what we enjoy about our church, what we should be doing, what causes we should support, how we should be using our financial resources, etc. etc. But we’ve rarely engaged in focused reflection on WHY we’re doing it - that is, the deep-rooted essence that sustains our excitement about being followers of Jesus. Simon Sinek says this about the importance of knowing your WHY:

Discovering your WHY provides “a tool that can bring clarity to that which is fuzzy and make tangible that which is abstract. Used properly, it can be used to...develop strategies and to communicate more clearly (internally and externally). The WHY can help set a vision to inspire people. The WHY can guide us to act with purpose, on purpose.”

During the next few months, KUCC will embark on a process of discovering our WHY. Facilitated by Lev Reynolds and myself, a group of 25-30 members of our congregation will convene on two Saturday mornings (Feb 8 and Mar 14) to work through a draft of KUCC’s WHY statement, to be presented to the full congregation for vote at our Congregational meeting on May 17th. If your heart is burning (that’s scriptural - see Luke 24:32!) to be part of this process, please let me know as soon as possible. Lev and I will be working hard to convene a group that represents the demographics of our congregation, as prescribed by Simon Sinek, himself.

The WHY statement you eventually embrace will serve as the foundation for all we do, and how we do it, for the next several years to come. It will represent our understanding of WHY God calls us, as a unique spiritual body of Christ, as a uniquely gifted faith community, to be God’s movement in the world in times such as these. It will help us define our mission, our ministries, our now, and our future - and will help us communicate it all to the world around us.

I’m hopeful, I’m excited!

God’s peace, Betsy
Upcoming Sunday Morning Adult Education Classes:

All About Martyrs
January 5, 12, 19, 26

What does it mean to be a martyr? Why are martyrs venerated by communities for centuries after their deaths? What is the relevance of martyr language for the church today? Come join us in January as we explore this often-ignored theme of our faith tradition of Christianity. Our instructor for this series will be the Rev. Dr. Adam Ployd, Assistant Professor of Church History and Historical Theology at Eden Theological Seminary.

CONGRATULATIONS TO KUCC’S 2020 CHURCH LEADERS AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!

Council President: John Blaser* (appointed until congregational vote in May)
Vice President: Mike Amsler
Treasurer: Dawn Volmert*
Secretary: Sue Laughlin* (term begins in February 2020)

Ministry Teams
Council Rep: Ken Heuermann
Team Coord: open
Building & Grounds: Kim Fine*
Mission & Outreach: Barb Harris
Stewardship & Finance: open
Worship & Music: Marie Andel*
Nurture & Ed: Rev. Dr. Lev Reynolds
Denominational Liaison: open

Financial Secretary: Vicki Short*
Asst. Financial Secy’s: Carol Bender*, Rose Brockhouse*

Endowment Council: Clint Bauer*, Wayne Enderling*, Richard Losciele
Personnel Committee: John Blaser*, Kari Adams, Beth Heuermann, Gerry Proctor
Nominating Committee: Mike Amsler, Lisa Bradley, Sharon Danyluck, Larry Willman

*italicized names are newly elected or appointed

AND, THANK YOU FOR YOUR FAITHFUL YEARS OF SERVICE...
We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the following volunteers who are coming off positions of lay leadership at KUCC:

- Rick Bender - President
- Carol Bender - Treasurer
- Chris Lucas - Recording Secretary
- Kari Adams - Mission & Outreach Council Rep
- John Blaser - Worship & Music Council Rep
- Vi Hennen - Building & Grounds Team Coord
- Lea Wendling - Worship & Music Team Coord
Filled With Gratitude for a Wonderful Christmas Play!

Thank you to the KUCC kids and youth who blessed us with a delightful and meaningful Christmas play, “The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey,” during worship on December 15th:


Special thanks to Jacob Rodriguez for herding cats, Murray Pounds for overseeing the tech booth, and all the parents who assisted with preparation and practice.
Kirkwood UCC Worship Series | Jan 5 - Feb 23

“We Believe”

In the midst of uncertainty, temptation, anger, grief, confusion… in other words, in the midst of the messiness of life, do you long for a solid centering on which you can “hang your hat”?

You may not be aware: there’s a faith-based, centralizing affirmation for UCC churches called the UCC Statement of Faith. During the seven weeks of the Epiphany season we’ll explore this beautiful testimony to God’s life-giving involvement in our lives. We hope parts of it will speak to you.

January 5 | God sets before us the ways of life and death
Deuteronomy 30:15-19
What might it mean to live one’s life in such a way that living and dying were, spiritually, unified and regarded as one?

January 12 | God seeks to save us from aimlessness and sin
1 Corinthians 12:4-11
Through God’s love, each of us has holy purpose. God never gives up on us, constantly luring us toward it...

January 19 | God judges humanity by the will of righteousness declared by prophets
Guest preacher Sonya Vann!

January 26 | In Jesus Christ, God has come to us, experienced all of life with us
Matthew 3:4-6, 11-17
As Jesus was baptized by the Holy Spirit, so are we. Help us celebrate the baptisms of two of our own!

February 2 | God bestows upon us the Holy Spirit to renew us as the body of Christ
Matthew 16:13-20
It’s been nearly 2000 years since the first followers of Jesus formed the Church. Two thousand! How are we to keep the connection to the spirit of Christ fresh and relevant?

February 9 | God calls us to accept the cost and joy of discipleship
Matthew 16:21-28
Being moved by a saving spirit bigger than us requires our attention, reflection and commitment. Just sayin’

February 16 | God promises eternal life in the kindom which has no end
Matthew 19:16-22
Ummmm...what? We’ll ponder a variety of ways we might understand the very confusing, “eternal life.”

February 23 | Mardi Gras weekend - preparing for Lent with AJSR and Inspired by Christ!
Music that will move your soul, with the African American brunch to follow
Thank you from God's Helping Hand

Our Christmas giveaway was a big success; I must admit this year went extremely well. Even though I was sick a few days, it pulled together beautifully. We were able serve 83 families, and partnered with Antioch in serving 150 additional kids. Our fruit and nut baskets with Christmas candy is always a special treat. As this year come to an end I must [say] God's Helping Hand is a wonderful job. I thank God for all my ministry partners who go way beyond the norm to help families in need. Thanks be to God for the awesome opportunity to serve.

Thanks and blessings,
Janis Hutchinson
Coordinator - God's Helping Hand
Jhane Brown, College Student

In August KUCC provided Jhane Brown with financial support for expenses for her sophomore year. We received the following letter from her.

Hello Kirkwood United Church of Christ,

This is Jhane Brown. I gave you all a speech in the beginning of the school year expressing my plans for my college career. I am reaching out to give you guys an update on my semester so far. I currently hold a title of being a Blue Tiger Ambassador where I am accountable for being a Student Leader. I also hold a Queen Position Miss 1911 of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc. I ended my first two semesters of my Freshmen year with a 2.9 GPA and a cumulative that stands at 2.76 as of now. I plan to continue to improve. I am beyond thankful for the donation that I was blessed to receive from your church. I wanted to personally thank you all and express how appreciative I am also updating you all on how far I have come. Walking in the second semester of my sophomore year I continue to improve my grades and becoming active on campus. I also plan on joining an organization where I can showcase my creativity and continue to give back to the community. Thank you all so much! Stay Blessed.

Jhane Brown

Best wishes to Jhane as she continues her college career.

in case of INCLEMENT WEATHER

KUCC INCLEMENT WEATHER

With the possibility of inclement weather looming ahead of us, just a reminder that KUCC cancellations are always posted on KMOV TV www.kmov.com and KSDK www.ksdk.com

The KUCC Facebook page will also provide this information. It seems like there have been a lot of "misses" in storm forecasting in recent years, so Betsy will not make a hasty decision about canceling worship. With that said, the most important thing is the safety of our congregants. God's blessings upon you!
The December Book and Baked Goods Sale was the most successful largest and most successful sale since September 2016. The profit from the December sale was $1,078.25. The Book Sale has raised a total of $3,177.47 for the KUCC 2019 operating budget.

Many people contributed to the success of this sale. First thanks to Larry Willman for his organization of the sale. Lee Gietzentanner who contributed over 2,000 books. Finally, thanks to the “Book Brigade” who, in addition to spending many hours sorting, shelving and organizing the books, CDs and DVDs, also worked on the day of the sale. Those individuals included JoAnn Hetisimer, Nancy Dieckmann, Marie Andel, Earline Stewart, Karen Kaul, Barb Thompson, Judy Lane, Sue Laughlin, Donna and Dan Bay, Katy McGuffee, Kristin Groetsch, Carol Bender, Betsy Happel, Peg Sant’Ambrogio, Cy and Carolyn Blackmore and Judy Kamper. Thanks also to the KUCC members and friends who bought baked goods and/or made donations to the sale.

While many books, CDs and DVDs have disappeared from our shelves and tables – many remain. Congregation members and invited to visit the books ‘store’ whenever they are in the building. Prices are posted and there a jar on the desk for your donation.

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**Place:** Kirkwood United Church of Christ  
**Date:** June 29, 30, July 1, 2 (Mon-Thurs)  
**Time:** 9:30-NOON  
**WHO:** ages 4 by June 1st---children entering 5th Grade  
Entering 6th Grade & older youth welcome as volunteers!

**It’s time for vacation Bible school!**

Welcome to Great Big Beautiful World!, an interactive vacation Bible school curriculum where children explore, celebrate, and care for God’s good creation! The five Bible stories in this VBS lead children on an awesome adventure through the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. Through worship and drama, Bible study, nature-themed art projects and snacks, active games, and science explorations, children will discover God’s love for all of creation. They will be challenged to care for God’s world in tangible ways - both during VBS and at home.

Mark your calendars NOW! Watch for more info and registration forms mid April!  
Ready to volunteer or need more info: contact Linda Reynolds lindareyno@aol.com
KUCC Asylum-seeker Support Ministry Update

An excerpt of an email from Rev. Dottie Mathews, Affiliated Community Minister, UU Church of Columbia, MO, UUSC Clergy Representative, Congregational Accompaniment Project for Asylum Seekers: "On a general front, I can tell you that the asylum work for everyone has slowed WAY down…. given all that this administration is doing, very few people are getting across and out. I have been working on two situations since I last saw you and neither has made any progress at all (we have made potential matches but the persons are stuck in detention and there is very little information available about their legal proceedings. One was moved to a new detention center and even their attorney was having great difficulty tracking them down.). It is such an enraging/heartbreaking MESS!"

On Wednesday, December 18th, Dottie Mathews contacted the KUCC Asylum Support Ministry Team with a possible family that can use KUCC’s support. KUCC would be part of reuniting separated youths (boys and girls) with their fathers and providing them with a place to stay. From Dottie: "My understanding is that when they make it back to the US, they will resume their initial plan to request to be granted asylum here. No guarantees at all. They are simply asylum seekers who were interrupted by our government separating them from their children. The timeline-like for all asylum seekers-is extremely unclear. I would imagine that their cases would be pretty much starting from scratch, because I believe their separation happened very soon after they arrived." The predicted date that the father & son/daughter would arrive in STL would be around January 20th/that week. The Asylum Support Ministry Team will be meeting with Rev. Dottie on Tuesday, December 30, @ 1pm at KUCC. The team will provide updated information to the congregation after this meeting.

What financial arrangements should the KUCC Asylum-support team make for this on-going ministry?

Last month we published a sample budget based on a single compa living with a family in Las Vegas. Our costs will vary based on our location and the needs of our compa. Actual fees and monthly costs may vary widely. How can you help with the costs? You can support this ministry with a sustaining donation or a one-time donation by writing a check to KUCC and put “Asylum support” on the memo line.

Laundry center update: Using Neighbors in Need grant money the team was awarded a year ago, a stacked washer & dryer unit has been installed in the restroom of the asylum apartment. Thank you to Brian Emigh, Emily Kuttenkuler’s nephew, and Paul Halwe for doing the plumbing work, electrical work, and the installation, respectively. Bob Steen is working on some shelving to replace the removed shelves in the installation of the laundry unit. Thanks Bob!

For more information/to volunteer, please feel free to contact any member of the Asylum Support team: Emily Kuttenkuler, Judy Kamper, Gerry Proctor, Karen Kaul, Mary Mohl, Barb Harris, Beth Heuermann, and Virginia Okoloko.

THANK YOU!
December 20, 2019

Pastor Betsy Happel
Kirkwood United Church of Christ
1603 Dougherty Ferry Rd.
Kirkwood, MO 63122

Dear Pastor Happel and Kirkwood United Church of Christ,

As you know, Alex Garcia has been living in sanctuary at Christ Church UCC in Maplewood for over 27 months. As the Garcia Family approached a third Christmas season living in the separation and uncertain state that is sanctuary, I wanted to find a way for the community that loves and supports them to not only offer our sincerest prayers for liberation, justice, and comfort, but also embody this spirit with material and financial support.

In 2017, IFCLA made a commitment to this family, and many of you have joined in that promise: to fully support Alex Garcia and his family in whatever this journey towards freedom and their effort to live with dignity would become. Part of that commitment is simply accompaniment, promising that we will walk with them in whatever experiences they endure. At times, this has been sharing quite joyful and energizing moments. At times, this has meant sitting together in anger, sadness and despair. Part of that commitment is fighting, organizing, advocating for the prompt end to this immoral separation.

As the holiday season drew nearer, it became clear to me that one of the many burdens the Garcia Family was enduring was the defeating credit card debt that had mounted since Alex took sanctuary. We are not yet able to make it right in the long term, but this was perhaps one heavy burden of their journey that we could lighten. With the family’s permission, I made private asks to several congregations and individuals, including you. I requested that you ask your communities to make a financial contribution to help alleviate the debt caused by sanctuary. In mid-November, I was unsure what we would be able to do in just a matter of weeks.

I am truly humbled by the quiet generosity and self-less support of this community. I am honored to share that we raised enough money and completely eliminated their credit card debt - paid in full on December 18, 2019! Plus, additional in-kind donations were provided to share the costs of gift-giving for the 5 Garcia children (and even something small from Carly and Alex). Finally, I was able to write the family a check for the amount that remained. Your contribution was part of over $10,000 that was raised in just three weeks. Thank you for your donation, and for your continued commitment to fight for Alex’s freedom, for family unity, and an end to injustice.
What was donated by your congregation and others represents one small way for all of us to accompany the Garcia Family this season. Sharing this news with them, making calls together to silence debt collectors, and sharing with them the comments and warmth many of you sent to me, was emotional for everyone. The three of us were in tears on more than one occasion, truly amazed and humbled by your support.

You were one of 7 congregations and nearly 20 individual donors that contributed to this effort. The names of the congregations, individuals and amounts contributed have remained anonymous, but will be named in our annual report as part of the sanctuary effort. If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know. Thank you for teaching me how to truly love thy neighbor and welcome the stranger among us.

I hope you and your families are able to experience joy, peace and comfort this season. Please join me in remembering Alex, Carly and the Garcia children, as well as all families resisting through sanctuary, and all peoples on the move, struggling to find a community of mercy, welcome, and love. May we all be blessed with strength and renewed spirit over the coming weeks for the lucha that awaits us in 2020 - and may this be the last holiday that the Garcia Family - and any family - spends in sanctuary!

With deep gratitude,

Sara John
Executive Director

CC: Emily Kuttenkuler
To all the wonderful people at Kirkwood UCC,

Please accept my thanks and love to all of you who worked so hard to make my daughter’s Memorial Service & “Gathering” afterwards so beautiful. Thank you for spending your day working to make the day special. Thank you, also, for such a great show of love towards Donna to make her sister’s memorial special. I can’t thank each of you enough. Love & God’s Blessings to each & every one of you.

Gale Uhlig (Diane & Donna’s Mom)

Dear KUCC Family,

How do I begin to thank each and every one of you for the love and support you have given me and my entire family over the past few months. Thank you for all the love and care you have given me with all your phone calls, txt message, cards and stopping in to see how I was doing is overwhelming. You all helped me through the worst time of my life (and still are) and I thank you and appreciate each and every one of you for your kindness.

The memorial reception that you all put together for Diane was absolutely perfect! The many donations of cookies and brownies and drinks that you all provided – AND the clean up afterwards – I thank you from the bottom of my heart. It was exactly what my sister wanted and you all granted her wishes.

I will never forget the love, kindness and support for me and my family – there are truly not enough words to describe how grateful and thankful I am to each and every one of you!

I Love you all!!

Donna
# January 2020 Worship Leaders

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>LECTORS</th>
<th>ACOLYTES</th>
<th>USHERS</th>
<th>GREETERS</th>
<th>NURSERY CARE GIVER (9 - Noon)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 5</td>
<td>Kristin Spradley</td>
<td>Colette Gezentanner</td>
<td>6th – 8th Grade Sunday School Class</td>
<td>Middle Schoolers &amp; Kim Finney</td>
<td>Jennifer Brockhouse</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 12</td>
<td>Rose Brockhouse</td>
<td>Nate Bauer</td>
<td>Karen Zinkl-Taylor Kari Adams</td>
<td>Lynne Plening</td>
<td>Jennifer Brockhouse</td>
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<td>January 19</td>
<td>Jill Stoll</td>
<td>Robbie Ridenhour</td>
<td>Rose Brockhouse Lynne Plening</td>
<td>Shirley Faust</td>
<td>Jennifer Brockhouse</td>
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<td>January 26</td>
<td>Jerri Davenport</td>
<td>Walden Gezentanner</td>
<td>Kristin Groetsch Lee Gezentanner</td>
<td>Chris Lucas</td>
<td>Jennifer Brockhouse</td>
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*Jennifer Brockhouse provides child care during worship for infants through 3-year-olds. During the Adult Education Hour she cares for the young ones, and school-age children as well.*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>“CHILDREN’S TIME” PRESENTERS</th>
<th>MISSION MOMENT</th>
<th>COFFEE HOUR</th>
<th>SOUND SYSTEM OPERATORS</th>
<th>SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS</th>
<th>OFFERING STEWARDS</th>
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<tr>
<td>January 5</td>
<td>Linda Reynolds</td>
<td>Tom &amp; Mary Rich</td>
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<td>Russ Kettenkuler Jack Bauer</td>
<td>Mike Amsler Sue Laughlin</td>
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<td>January 12</td>
<td>Barb Harris</td>
<td>Rick &amp; Carol Bender</td>
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<td>Russ Kettenkuler Nathaniel Fine</td>
<td>Kim Fine Ken Heuermann</td>
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<td>January 19</td>
<td>Judy Kamper</td>
<td>Sue Lunnemann Virginia Okoloko</td>
<td>Murray Pounds</td>
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<td>Lev Reynolds John Blaser</td>
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<td>January 26</td>
<td>Betsy</td>
<td>Richard &amp; Sharon Danyluck</td>
<td>Ron Humphrey</td>
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<td>Marie Andel Barb Harris</td>
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# January 2020

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<tr>
<th>SUNDAY</th>
<th>MONDAY</th>
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<tr>
<td>Worship/Communion</td>
<td>Al-Anon*</td>
<td>Al-Anon*</td>
<td>Office Closed</td>
<td>Adult Faith Formation</td>
<td>Men's Prayer Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30a Coffee Hour</td>
<td>Adult Ed</td>
<td>6:00p Yoga*</td>
<td>Meditation</td>
<td>Women's Fellowship</td>
<td>LOGOS</td>
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<td>11:00a Adult Ed</td>
<td>7:00p SLAA*</td>
<td>6:00p Church Council</td>
<td>Lectio Divina Bible Study</td>
<td>5:00p</td>
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<td>12:00p Member Information Lunch</td>
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<td>Adult Faith Formation</td>
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<td>10:30a Coffee Hour</td>
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<td>Church Council</td>
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<td>1:00p</td>
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<td>Choir practice</td>
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<td>Month of Peace</td>
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<td>Choir practice</td>
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<td>7:15a</td>
<td>Martin Luther Ling, Jr. Day</td>
<td>11:15a Al-Anon*</td>
<td>10:00a</td>
<td>11:15a Al-Anon*</td>
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<td>Group leaves to cook food</td>
<td>Office Closed</td>
<td>6:00p Yoga*</td>
<td>Adult Faith Formation</td>
<td>Adult Faith Formation</td>
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<td>9:30a Worship</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30a Worship/Baptisms</td>
<td>10:00a Al-Anon*</td>
<td>11:15a Al-Anon*</td>
<td>10:00a Adult Faith Formation</td>
<td>11:15a Al-Anon*</td>
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No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here!

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP
Sunday Worship & Sunday School at 9:30 a.m.
Adult Education at 11:00 a.m. (Sundays)

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All articles for the next Newsletter are due to the church office at donna@kirkwooducc.org no later than January 15.