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 – May 2020

“Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.
Put my yoke upon your shoulders—it might appear heavy at first,
but it is perfectly fitted to your curves.
Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart.
When you are yoked to me, your weary souls will find rest.
For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30

As we continue along this pandemic path, it’s becoming clear to me that the stress is starting to get to us, presenting itself in a variety of ways, but presenting itself pervasively, nonetheless. It’s a lot: uncertainty, isolation, the fight for survival, the fight for food, parents-being-teachers when they barely have enough time to be parents, grief through loss, grief from death...it’s a lot. Many of us are feeling exhausted; nearly all of us are feeling weary. Thank God for God, and also for Jesus, who reveals that God to us. A cool drink from the deep well of mercy and grace would taste mighty refreshing right now.

I recently read about the existence of two different kinds of human stressors, and I credit family therapists Betty Carter and Monica McGoldrick with this insight. One stressor, they suggest, is “horizontal” in nature, impacting entire communities, nations, or the world. In the U.S., 911 is an example of a horizontal stressor. Natural disasters serve as another. The other stressor is “vertical” in nature, impacting only certain groups of people within a society, usually the most disenfranchised. So, racism, sexism, ageism, poverty and poor education are examples of vertical stressors.

One could argue, I suppose, that there is a third type of stressor, acute stressors, the result of one event that impacts a smaller, defined group of people. Divorce, job loss, death, or serious illness are examples of acute stressors.

No wonder we’re feeling disoriented and weary after only six weeks of this pandemic! As a body we are all experiencing, at one time, both horizontal and vertical stressors, with no true end in sight. As a body, the majority of us are experiencing at least one acute stressor on top of that. After six weeks, we’re starting to feel it. At least I am. Our souls are bearing a heavy burden.
Here’s what I want to say:
First, the difficult news: we have several more stages of the grieving process ahead of us, meaning the weariness will not only continue, but will have lasting impact, probably for years. If you’ve experienced the death of a loved one or another form of great loss in your life, you know the reverberations of weariness that continue on long after the burden appears to be tangible.

But, hold on, for there’s also good news: in God we find the ultimate burden-holder, the quintessential mercy-dispenser, the awe-inspiring grace-bestower...not sure how God does it, but there is enough divine energy in the midst of pandemic for all to be saved - whatever that means to you right now. I’m willing to hold that thought closely in my heart.

Jesus said, “Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” If you’ve been wondering about your faith, about the need for something bigger than you in your life, now would be a good time to believe.

God’s peace, Betsy
ADULT EDUCATION SUNDAY, May 3 at 11 am:
Talk Saves Lives: An Introduction to Suicide Prevention
Did you know that May is Suicide Prevention month? During this class, on May 3 following worship, we will learn the risks and warning signs of suicide, and how together, we can help prevent it. Our presenter will be from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP). AFSP is a voluntary health organization that gives those affected by suicide a nationwide community empowered by research, education and advocacy to take action against this leading cause of death. AFSP is dedicated to saving lives and bringing hope to those affected by suicide. This will be conducted via Zoom, so watch for instructions for how to access this.

TWO REMAINING SOULFUL, MID-WEEK ACTIVITIES ON ZOOM:

Watercolors with Amanda - Wednesday, May 13 at 7 pm
(See Amanda’s “Snappy New Day Art” page on Facebook!)
Amanda will teach us step by step how to paint some colorful feathers with soothing watercolor. Inspired by this beautiful verse: “God will protect you with God’s feathers; you’ll find refuge under God’s wings”, Amanda hopes you leave our painting session feeling peaceful and joyful knowing that God is protecting us all the time.

Here’s what you’ll need:
- Watercolor paint (If you don’t have paint, you can use regular markers! Amanda can show you how!)
- Watercolor paper (Or bring whatever you have, thicker paper is better)
- Paint brush (preferably a round brush with a pointy end)

Amanda wants you to remember that many people are beginners, so give yourself grace and come to have fun and create!

Soul Collage - Wednesday, May 27 at 7 pm
Led by Betsy
Soul Collage is a creative way to express your inner world using images, intuition and imagination. It’s amazing what the choice of images can reveal about your spiritual self! More details to come, but in the meantime, if you have access to magazines, it would be helpful to retain them between now and May 27. If you don’t not to worry...
JOIN US FOR WORSHIP
Sunday Worship @ 9:30 am on Zoom
see details on our website www.kirkwooducc.org

SUMMER CHILDREN’S MINISTRIES AT KUCC

As we write this, there are still many unknowns about what our summer ministries might include.

For now, we are canceling our traditional Vacation Bible School scheduled for June 29- July 2.

We’re considering other experiences and will share our ideas and poll your availability in the near future. In the meantime, Deb and Linda will continue to communicate with weekly Sunday School lessons and other family faith formation opportunities. Deb will schedule another Zoom Sunday School soon and we hope many of you will plan to join us. WE MISS YOU! Stay safe. Be well. (Linda Reynolds)
A note about financial giving for KUCC during these extraordinary times:

We are grateful for the many ways KUCC members and friends support our wonderful faith community. Truly, we are a body of Christ’s spirit, and our connected with each other, and the world around us, will hold strong. We recognize that the financial realities of some of us will change in the weeks to come. If you are able to continue supporting KUCC financially as you have, thank you. If you find yourself unable to do so, we ask that you give as you are able. We’ll get through this and make temporary adjustments as necessary. Every little bit will help in order to maintain KUCC outreach ministries (needed more than ever), staff compensation, church facility utilities, etc. There are three ways for you to give financially to KUCC:

- through the GIVE button on the home page of our website, www.kirkwooducc.org.
- through automatic deductions from your checking account, established through your own bank.
- by sending a check to the church at 1603 Dougherty Ferry Rd., Kirkwood, 63122. The mail is being checked regularly.

We thank you for your support!

KIRKCARE IS IN NEED of non-perishable goods for their food pantry. If you are shopping for your own grocery needs and could purchase a few extra items for KirkCare, it would be greatly appreciated. Food items can be left on Rose and Doug Brockhouse’s front stoop, 612 Rosewood Lane, Kirkwood, 63122. Or, you can send a check donation to the church, indicating KirkCare on the memo line. Or, you can make a donation on the Kirkwood UCC website (www.kirkwooducc.org) and send an email to Carol Bender, one of our Financial Secretaries, cbender218@charter.net indicating the purpose of the donation. Thank you!
No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here!

Sunday Worship @ 9:30 am on Zoom
see details on our website
www.kirkwooducc.org

KUCC STAFF
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All articles for the next Newsletter are due to the church office at donna@kirkwooducc.org no later than May 22.