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 – July 2020

“There’s more to come:

We continue to shout our praise even when we’re hemmed in with troubles, because we know how troubles can develop passionate patience in us, and how that patience in turn forges the tempered steel of virtue, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next.”
Romans 5:3-4 The Message

Twenty years ago, while I was still in seminary part-time, I had the opportunity to do pulpit supply at a Disciples of Christ church in rural Dexter, MO. With Romans 5:1-5 as my foundation, I shared a story about a walk Rick and I had taken the previous year while visiting my dad in St. George, UT. The walk was long and arduous, along a dirt trail that clung to the side of a beautiful, copper-colored rock wall. Our goal: to reach a waterfall we’d heard - from my dad - was worth the trouble. The trail wasn’t at all crowded; in fact, we may have only passed a few people both ways. And so, as the trail kept going and going and going, we started to lose confidence in ourselves, thinking we most surely had missed a fork in the trail, or even the waterfall itself. You know the feeling: a blanket of anxiety falls upon you, and you begin to make plans for a worst-case scenario.

Just about the moment we were ready to give up and head back to the car - the evening shadows were beginning to fall - we heard a very faint murmur in the distance. The sound became a little louder and more pronounced with each step we took, drawing us toward it, even in our uncertainty. We kept going, motivated and hopeful. This had better be worth the walk, I thought. It was, indeed. Turning a corner, we suddenly heard a huge roar and just like that: before us was an unexpected and spectacular waterfall. Our patience and endurance had paid off.
Ahhh...those were simpler times. Much simpler times. Today it seems quaint, naive, laughable even, that a walk on a trail could serve as an illustration for patience and endurance. Since I preached that message back in 2000 we have collectively endured or witnessed: 9/11, two wars, a great recession, the mass shooting of 20 first and second graders, escalating injustices, an uptick in hate crimes, violent and non-violent protests, radical weather patterns, a pandemic, a depression and a government that is malfunctioning - and that's just the short list. Life has required far more patience and endurance than we could have envisioned, and, I fear, there will be far more patience and endurance required in our future. As Romans 5:3 says above, “There’s more to come...”

Which is why it’s important for us to embrace the verses in Romans 5 that follow those above:

“In alert expectancy such as this, we’re never left feeling shortchanged.

Quite the contrary—we can’t round up enough containers to hold everything
God generously pours into our lives through the Holy Spirit!”

Apparently there are divine gifts that can arise out of especially trying times: the development of personal character and virtues, for instance. Wokeness and courage and compassion, for instance. Authenticity, perspective, and interdependence. May it be so.

Rounding the corner, the magnificence of the waterfall took my breath away. Took my breath away, as if for a moment I couldn’t breathe. Again, simpler times.

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

Summer Movies:

Yes, we are having them!
How do we hear God still speaking to us, especially in the everyday activities of our lives? Is it ever through contemporary media messages? The movies? Or is it in conversation with others? Or could it be in conversation with others about the messages we see and hear around us? FOR THE MONTH OF JULY the Sunday morning Adult Education classes will be held VIA ZOOM, watching the movie, “JoJo Rabbit” remotely through the Zoom platform from our homes and discussing it-- just like we would if we were in the KUCC theater together! While you may have seen the movie already, did you think about what message it may have had for you about your faith? Your daily life? And how does your faith reflect on the contemporary issues brought up in the film? We will explore these and other questions, and what we may “hear” being spoken to us. Join us!

About the movie:
Jojo is a lonely German boy who discovers that his single mother is hiding a Jewish girl in their attic. Aided only by his imaginary friend – Adolf Hitler – Jojo must confront his blind nationalism as World War II continues to rage on.

Zoom viewing & discussion*:
Sunday, July 12, 19, & 26
11 am – 12pm
*If you normally “dial in” to the Zoom service on your phone, we are not sure if you will be able to “watch” the movie with us. Please consider renting the movie on your own and join us in the discussion!
JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

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

If you are unable to participate in KUCC Sunday Worship you can go to KUCC website https://www.kirkwooducc.org/, or the Kirkwood UCC Facebook page, and watch the entire service. These are posted every Monday morning.

Evening Prayer

For times such as these.

We will be offering an Evening Prayer Service weekly over Zoom to give us time to reflect on God’s great goodness to us, on God’s presence in the times of trouble, and God’s guidance into the future. Using a contemplative style of worship, Lev and Linda Reynolds will lead us through a time of Prayer and Meditation on Scripture, the writings of spiritual guides, and that will strengthen our souls and lead us closer to God. We will conclude by joining our hearts in guided Prayer.

Evening Prayer will open at 8:55 pm with music to guide us into the service and begin at 9:00 pm. We are scheduling it at this time to guide us into a more restful night so that we awaken refreshed for a new day.

A Zoom invitation will be sent out by email.
We hope you will join us for this time of Prayer and Meditation.

THANK YOU! MAY 2020 GIVING/EXPENDITURE INFORMATION

Each month KUCC’s Church Council will report on our church’s basic giving and expenditures from the previous month. We are especially grateful for the ongoing financial support we are receiving in the midst of these extraordinary times. Following is the information for May 2020:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>May Actual</th>
<th>YTD Actual</th>
<th>YTD Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INCOME</td>
<td>$18,308</td>
<td>$105,300</td>
<td>$104,022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPENSES</td>
<td>$20,055</td>
<td>$104,947</td>
<td>$106,913</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because of your generosity, during the month of May, KUCC was able to: offer two spiritual formation activities (watercolor and soul collage); celebrate Pentecost online - a first!; and provide pastoral care to congregants in hospice care and their families. Thank you!
AN ANTIRACIST READING LIST, FOR TIMES SUCH AS THESE

Ibram X. Kendi is a professor, writer and director of the Antiracist Research & Policy Center at American University. On May 29 he wrote the following in a piece entitled “An Antiracist Reading List” in The New York Times:

“To build a nation of equal opportunity for everyone, we need to dismantle this spurious legacy of our common upbringing. One of the best ways to do this is by reading books. Not books that reinforce old ideas about who we think we are, what we think America is, what we think racism is. Instead, we need to read books that are difficult or unorthodox, that don’t go down easily. Books that force us to confront our self-serving beliefs and make us aware that ‘I’m not racist’ is a slogan of denial.

The reading list below is composed of just such books — a combination of classics, relatively obscure works and a few of recent vintage. Think of it as a stepladder to antiracism, each step addressing a different stage of the journey toward destroying racism’s insidious hold on all of us.”

FATAL INVENTION: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-create Race in the Twenty-first Century by Dorothy Roberts (2011)


THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD by Zora Neale Hurston (1937)

THE NEGRO ARTIST AND THE RACIAL MOUNTAIN by Langston Hughes, The Nation, June 23, 1926
THE BLUEST EYE
by Toni Morrison (1970)

THE BLACKER THE BERRY
by Wallace Thurman (1970|1929)

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM X
by Malcom X and Alex Haley (1964)

DYING OF WHITENESS: How the Politics of Racial Resentment Is Killing America’s Heartland
by Jonathan M. Metzl (1965|2019)

LOCKING UP YOUR OWN: Crime and Punishment in Black America
by James Forman, Jr. (2017)

BLACK MARXISM: The making of the Black Radical Tradition
by Cedric J. Robinson (1983)

WAITING ‘TIL THE MIDNIGHT HOUR: A Narrative History of Black Power in America
by Peniel E. Joseph (2006)

HOW WE GET FREE: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective
ed. by Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (2017)

WELL-READ BLACK GIRL: Finding Stories, Discovering Ourselves
ed. by Glory Edim (2017)
An update from the Asylum Seeker Support Team:

The Asylum Seeker Support Team (ASST) met in May and made the decision to postpone being matched with another asylum seeker/family until the border reopens. While we know that there are currently immigrants in detention who need sponsors, the team feels strongly that the pandemic needs to be more under control before we move forward with our support. We will continue to encourage support for the Hernandez family. We wired them $200 in June so that they could buy shoes for the boys. This money will come out of the Asylum Support fund. Judy Kamper will work with Jill Stoll, Donna Bay and Carol Bender to get info on the Mission in Action (MiA) page on the KUCC website and to create a separate fund for them. If they haven’t already, the family is considering a move to Tijuana, Mexico where Jose feels he can get work. Please see Judy’s newsletter update on the family and how you can support them. Please also look at the MiA page for ways that you can support immigrants in our community.

Members of the team continue to attend webinars and meetings in order to try to keep up with the ever-changing regulations surrounding immigration.
Update from Janis Hutchinson, Coordinator for God’s Helping Hands

June 9, 2020

Outreach Partners,

Update on the status of God’s Helping Hand and where we are heading.

Sunday breakfast is on hold for the foreseeable future, we just can’t see a way to serve sit down meals safely at this time. I am trying to figure out a way to provide a hot meal in a new and safe way. Until then breakfast teams please consider donating your breakfast funds to God's Helping Hand for Antioch's food pantry. Antioch’s food pantry has been closed since March, however working in partnership we have continued to feed as many in the community as we can. God’ Helping hand has been delivering the senior food boxes and family food bags to over 50 families a week since April. We reached out to families on the food pantry and senior list, in addition to referrals. Our goal was to continue to serve the community that has depended on Antioch and God’s Helping Hand.

With help from the St Louis City Health Department we were able to apply and receive the Flourish-St Louis Covid –19 community relief grant. The purpose of the grant is to help community outreach groups that are currently serving families during this crisis with funds to help them continue to meet the needs of the community. Grant funds are to be use for feeding and helping with some basic needs. We are reopening the food pantry on a limited basis to help families during the summer. Our target reopening date is June 23rd. Tuesday and Thursdays for 2 hours will be our opening times. Our goal is to pass out premade food bags, hygiene, cleaning and paper products. Helping families through the summer months, making sure children are fed. In addition to continuing food deliveries to seniors and those who are high risk and can't come out.*

One of the grant guidelines is we must meet the CDC Covid -19 safety requirements. Safe distancing, safe practices (gloves, masks, sanitized). Due to safety concern for now we are limiting the number of workers. Myself and assistant Tawana will be manning the pantry. We will [be] handing out pre-packed food bags, limiting the contact with clients. We will start this week stocking the pantry from a stockpile of food from making home deliveries. This food is currently stored at Tawana’s home. Once funds from grant come through, we purchase items needed to meet grant requirement and additional food for the pantry.

God's Helping Hand’s goal is still to offer a helping hand and a spiritual lift to those in need in our community.

Any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me.

Thanks and blessings,

Janis Hutchinson
Coordinator -God's Helping Hand

*NOTE: KUCC is currently sending money from our Breakfast Program fund to the Antioch Baptist Church food pantry. This is the amount we would normally spend on Breakfast Program food. ~$250.00.
*NEW* Our Faith Our Vote Our Voice 2020
As a denomination, the United Church of Christ has a long history of engaging in the political process to bring about social change which aligns with the church’s vision of God’s kingdom. These efforts continue in this critical election year under the campaign “Our Faith Our Vote Our Voice 2020.” You can visit the website to become educated about the issues, check voter registration status, and find ways to become engaged.

https://www.ucc.org/ourfaithourvote

*NEW* Weekly Black Lives Matter Vigils at KUCC
We'll be gathering outside KUCC every Thursday at 5:00 pm and we’d love to have you join us. Bring a lawn chair and face mask, and a sign if you'd like. Questions? Contact Kristin Spradley at spradleykristin07@gmail.com.
Mission in Action
https://www.kirkwooducc.org/mission-action

Poor People’s Campaign
On Saturday, June 20, 2020 The Poor People’s Campaign held a national call for Moral Revival. If you were unable to be a part of the online event, you can still see it in its entirety. It provides a striking account of the myriad of ways people in the United States are harmed by the ingrained systems in our economy and social structures. You can also sign up to be part of the campaign to end the economic injustice and all the harm that flows from it in our country. Visit june2020.org

Update on the Hernandez Family –
The Hernandez family continues living with Nancy Hernandez’s sister in Honduras. Life is extremely difficult there as no jobs are available and the family was deported with no money. Judy Kamper has been able to wire them some funds (contribution from someone not affiliated with KUCC) with which they bought food and shoes for the boys. The Asylum Seeker Support Team is committed to providing what support we can to the family. If you are interested in contributing to supporting the Hernandez family, you can do so by writing a check to KUCC and indicating it is for the Hernandez family.

Voting in Missouri during COVID-19
Due to the pandemic, voting by absentee ballot rules have been changed in Missouri to make it possible for more people to vote by mail. People who are at greater risk of complications from the coronavirus are able to request a ballot be mailed to them. Anyone can request a mail-in ballot, but if you are not among the designated at-risk populations, you must have your ballot notarized before mailing it in. There has never been a time when your vote counts more! You can visit these websites to check your status as a registered voter and to request your mail-in ballot. Vote.org https://www.sos.mo.gov/elections
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!
TRANSPORTATION AND GROCERY GETTER DRIVERS NEEDED

The Shepherd’s Center of Webster-Kirkwood is part of a national network of 57 centers. Since 1998, we have helped older adults to find enrichment, maintain independence and stay socially active. Over 300 volunteers help us fulfill our mission. We need you!

HOW WE SERVE OUR CLIENTS - TRANSPORTATION
• Free rides to medical appointments
• Ambulatory (no wheelchairs) older adults aged 55+
• Tuesdays, Wednesday, Thursdays
• 9am to 3 pm
• Service area boundaries apply
• Round-trip service

HOW WE SERVE OUR CLIENTS - GROCERY GETTERS
• Grocery shopping and delivery (when volunteer drivers are shopping for themselves)
• Older adults aged 55+
• Service area boundaries apply

INTERESTED IN JOINING THE TEAM?
• Complete an application and online background check
• Attend one orientation meeting
• Once approved, sign-up for rides using our online RideScheduler system (or via telephone if you prefer)
• Minimum of one drive per month
• Social distancing, mask wearing and other St. Louis County Health Department required protocols discussed during training
• Contact Karen Zelle, Services Coordinator by email: kzelle@shepherdscenter-wk.org or phone 314-395-0988 to get started.
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

Betsy Happel, Pastor
(betsy@kirkwooducc.org)

Amelia Lloyd, Director of Music Ministry
(amelialloyd222@gmail.com)

Ron Bryant, Accompanist
(bigfaye1965@yahoo.com)

Merry Keller, Accompanist
(mkeller746@gmail.com)

Donna Bay, Administrative Assistant
(donna@kirkwooducc.org)

Jennifer Brockhouse, Nursery Care Giver

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