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 – September 2020

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me.
He has sent me to preach good news to the poor;
to proclaim release to the prisoners
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to liberate the oppressed,
and to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Luke 4:18-19

Thanks to the energy of Kristin Spradley, on Thursday, June 25, at 5:00 pm, 28 members and friends of KUCC gathered on the front lawn of the church property for our very first Black Lives Matter vigil. The experience was moving and fulfilling, perhaps because we were happily in each other’s presence (a COVID-related treat!); but more so because of the responses elicited from those passing by. We were noticed, and our presence prompted people to think and react. The responses were overwhelmingly positive - many horn honks, waves, and thumbs up, and even some cheers from open car windows. We decided, quite easily, that we should do it again. In fact, we decided we should do it every Thursday from 5-6 pm, which we have been doing ever since. On any given Thursday we are blessed to have 15-20 participants, and the ministry feels good.

Not every response we receive is positive, of course. We’ve received a few thumbs down, a few middle fingers up, a few heads shaking “uh-uh,” a few rants and raves, a few “All Lives Matter!” Just last week one driver yelled, “You should be ashamed to call yourselves Christians!” and another screamed “Marxists!” When those reactions are elicited we wave and I usually yell “We love you!” which, of course, they never hear. But we do, and there’s power in that.
The Black Lives Matter movement is extraordinarily important during times such as these, and I’m proud our faith community has supported it for the past six years. With that said, I recognize there is some confusion about its purpose, what it stands for, and what it’s trying to accomplish. I recognize there are some who believe the Black Lives Matter movement is evil and destructive.

KUCC’s involvement with the Black Lives Matter vigils provides me with a holy opportunity to address some of the misconceptions floating out there about this movement. There are many, but here are the four circulating most widely right now, and my thoughts about each.

**Misconception #1: We don’t believe that All Lives Matter**

Well, um, of course we do! In fact, that’s exactly the point! We believe that all lives matter, which includes our Black siblings who are systematically not treated as though their lives matter. Systemic racism, on which our nation was literally built, is so deeply embedded within our structures that it will take multiple generations to overcome its destruction. One significant way to impact the power of those structures is to create a LOT of awareness. Awareness can be a powerful force. The more we proclaim that Black Lives Matter, the greater the opportunity for white-privileged eyes and hearts to take note of the embedded racism that surrounds them. Black lives don’t matter more than other lives, but they do matter as much as other lives. As long as Black lives are treated as if they don’t matter as much as White lives, we have work to do in the name of Jesus Christ.

**Misconception #2: We don’t support the police**

This is incorrect. Some of the most life-giving people in the world are police officers, and we are grateful for their service. Here’s what we don’t support: We don’t support racist policing methods and ethos, police brutality, and racial profiling. We don’t support the school-to-prison pipelines that impact a much higher percentage of Black students and are pervasive in our society. We don’t support police officers who bring harm or threat to communities of color. We do support enhanced training and reform. Policing that serves and protects all lives is good for our communities.
Misconception #3: The Black Lives Matter movement is a terrorist organization

In 2013, three prophetic Black women - Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi - organized a movement called Black Lives Matter in response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the murder of Trayvon Martin. This movement gained more traction in Ferguson with the death of Michael Brown in August 2014. Today the Black Lives Matter Global Network has chapters all over the world and continues to do work toward racial justice and healing. In the meantime, out of this, the Black Lives Matter slogan, which is on the signs on our church lawn, has come to represent a broader movement bringing more mainstream awareness to systemic racism, and activating hundreds of thousands of people to work for racial justice in all our living.

Here’s an excerpt from the website of the Black Lives Matter Global Network (www.blacklivesmatter.com) that further explains their mission:

“Our continued commitment to liberation for all Black people means we are continuing the work of our ancestors and fighting for our collective freedom because it is our duty.

Every day, we recommit to healing ourselves and each other, and to co-creating alongside comrades, allies, and family a culture where each person feels seen, heard, and supported...We work vigorously for freedom and justice for Black people and, by extension, all people. We intentionally build and nurture a beloved community that is bonded together through a beautiful struggle that is restorative, not depleting.

We are unapologetically Black in our positioning. In affirming that Black Lives Matter, we need not qualify our position. To love and desire freedom and justice for ourselves is a prerequisite for wanting the same for others.”

When there is pushback against the established power structures of our society, the established power structures push back in kind. This phenomenon is biblical, at the very center of Jesus’ ministry and death. Those who are threatened by movements that proclaim equality among people of color will go to great lengths to develop narratives to take such movements down. Two days before the KUCC BLM vigilers heard “Marxist!” screamed from a passing truck window, a reporter for a right-wing news outlet published a story claiming that Black Lives Matter is a Marxist organization. To be clear, Black Lives Matter is not a terrorist movement.
Misconception #4: Black Lives Matter is an anti-semitic movement
This also is a narrative floating out there with no traction. The Black Lives Matter movement is supported by many progressive Jewish organizations, including The Jewish Council for Public Affairs (www.jewishpublicaffairs.org). Rabbi Susan Talve, who serves Central Reform Congregation in St. Louis, has been very active in the Black Lives Matter movement since Michael Brown’s murder. In fact, Central Reform Congregation has the Black Lives Matter logo on the homepage of its website. It’s unclear how this misconception came to be. It might be tied to the fact that a few BLM activists were also engaged in activism against Israel for their treatment of the Palestinians. One of the downsides to the BLM movement is that there is no centralized leadership, allowing some participants’ individual viewpoints to become co-mingled with the larger movement. To be clear, the Black Lives Matter movement is not anti-semitic.

I hope some of this information will be helpful to those with lingering questions about the Black Lives Matter movement and KUCC’s engagement in the weekly vigils. Truly, we are doing the work of Jesus by expressing our voices and serving as a witness to the Kirkwood community.

If you have further questions, I’d enjoy hearing from you. Or, if you now feel more compelled than ever to join in on Thursday evenings at 5 pm, we’d love to have you with us!
This is important ministry. I’m grateful for your hearts.

God’s peace, Betsy
September Adult Education at KUCC:

A look inside immigrant trauma-
Sunday, September 13, 11am – 12pm.

“Many families and children who migrate to St. Louis have suffered trauma that impedes their adjustment to the St. Louis community. We are one of the few providers in the St. Louis area who offer Spanish-language therapy to children, adults, and families as they work through these past experiences.”* KUCC is continuing to keep our focus on a time when we will welcome an asylum-seeker/s into our church family. When they come to us, we want to be prepared to support them with any trauma they have suffered—either in their home country, on the journey here, and/or in ICE detention. Speaking to us will be Alina Hille, a bilingual therapist from St Francis Community Services in St Louis. Alina currently works with adults and formerly worked with children and families at the agency. Alina is eager to speak to our Adult Ed group and answer questions we may have. She will join us via Zoom. *from the SFCS website.

Why Do We Do It? Social Justice as a Spiritual Practice-
Sunday, September 20, 11am – 12pm

Working on behalf of social justice causes can be discouraging, especially during times when those in power feel especially threatened and compelled to push back; especially during a pandemic when actively engaging in ministry seems limited in its scope. Perhaps we could use a little reminder: What is social justice? And why do we do what we do?

Betsy will lead a discussion about the biblical, theological and spiritual reasons why all of God’s children are called to engage in some form of social justice reform. What lights a fire under you?

Adult Ed note: There will not be an adult Ed offering on Sunday, September 6 nor Sunday, September 27.
“Openings”
KUCC’s Sunday Worship Series
September 6 - 27, 2020

God makes a way when there is no way - the openings that surround us are abundant! During these times of feeling contained, stuck, trapped and held back, let’s celebrate the ways that God continues to open us up:
- through work for the common good;
- through forgiveness;
- through unexplored thresholds; and
- through the unwrapping of our authentic selves.

Who knew there were so many holy possibilities?

September 6
Opening Night | the life-giving, organic energy of working together toward common good

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:1-6 (The Message)
Communion

September 13
Open Heart/Open Mind | Mike Amsler, guest preacher

Scripture: Matthew 18:21-35 (Parable of the unforgiving servant)

September 20
Thresholds | new opportunities, new beginnings

Scripture: Isaiah 43:16-21 (The Voice)
Outdoor worship

September 27
Unwrapped | the power in revealing one’s true, authentic self

Scripture: Romans 12:1-2, 9-18 (The Voice)
MARK YOUR CALENDARS!
Nurture and Education is excited to be offering these opportunities for our KUCC Families with children PreK through 8th Grade (older youth in your home are always welcome):

OUTDOOR, SOCIALLY DISTANCED, GATHERINGS
(Parent/Caring adult expected to co-participate.)
Time Frame is approximately 30-45 minutes. Building/bathrooms not available.

Thursday, September 10  6:30 PM
Outdoor Yoga
Plan to bring a beach towel or blanket, mat if you have one, to the back parking lot or grassy area (TBD). The evening will include child and family friendly yoga poses to help end your day in a relaxing way.

Thursday, October 8  6:30 PM
Chalk the Parking Lot
Join us on the back parking lot where we'll chalk messages of hope and hospitality for the Sunday outdoor worshippers to enjoy on Oct. 11th. We'll provide the chalk!

Thursday, October 29  6:30 PM
Family Campfire
Halloween costumes welcome as we gather for a campfire and a take-home bag of Halloween treats. Bring your blanket or lawn chairs and plan on sharing a joke or funny story or two with us around our socially distanced campfires.

VIRTUAL LOGOS
Thursdays, September 24, October 22, November 12 and December 10 6:00-7:15PM
Watch for more information via email. Plan to have dinner with your family at 6:00PM AND your KUCC LOGOS family via Zoom. We'll provide you with table talk questions that coordinate with the session's theme. You'll join other families via Zoom for dinner together or possibly in a breakout space. At 6:15 we'll gather for Recreation (virtual game or family craft), Bible Study and Worship Arts sometimes all together but also with the option of breakouts groups by age....

The Nurture and Ed Team and our LOGOS Volunteers are really, really, really looking forward to our time together! Hope to see you there!
OUTDOOR WORSHIP AT KUCC - September 20 at 9:30 am

The Worship & Music team is preparing for an outdoor worship service to be held on the church parking lot on Sunday, September 20 at 9:30 am. The service held on August 23 was a wonderful experience, and we’re excited about doing it again. Bring your own lawn chair and coffee!

If you’d like to attend, please RSVP to Donna Bay at donna@kirkwooducc.org with the number attending. To ensure safety during these COVID times, we’ll be limiting participation to 40 and masks will be required.

SOUL COLLAGE with Betsy - September 23 at 7 pm on Zoom

It’s amazing what a relatively small space can reveal to you about your soul! Soul Collage* is an easy collage process that uses limited space (a 5x8” card) and a limited number of images to create a collage that intuitively expresses what’s resting in your soul at the moment. The result can be deeply insightful.

Betsy will lead the collage-making on Zoom on Wednesday, September 23 at 7:00 pm. In order to participate, it will be helpful for you to have a packet of materials prepared ahead of time by Betsy. Betsy will be at KUCC on Friday, 9/18 and Tuesday, 9/22 between 2:00 and 2:30 pm to safely distribute packets to those who would like to participate. Just drive up to the doors off the back parking lot. All you’ll need on your own is a pair of scissors.

The Zoom link will be sent out the week before for all who would like to participate. Questions? Contact Betsy at bfhappel@gmail.com. We hope you’ll be able to join us!

* Soul Collage is a copyrighted art method
Dismantling White Supremacy Pandemic Book Studies
Missouri Mid-South Conference Offerings
Wednesdays at 4 pm on Zoom

September 16 – November 18
How to Be an Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi

Ginny writes, “Our conversations will include active assignments for how we are dismantling white supremacy during these pandemics. If you are members and a pastor of a church looking for a substantive book study, I invite you to join us. May God’s transformative spirit break open within us in the study and antiracism work we will do together as the Missouri Mid-South Conference.”

To access the Zoom link for these book discussions, go to the Missouri Mid-South Conference website (www.missourimidsouth.org), click on “NEWS” on the homepage, and then click on the most recent edition of the eCourier. Look for the blurb in the eCourier entitled “Dismantling White Supremacy Pandemic Book Studies.”
Dear Friends at Kirkwood United Church of Christ,

On behalf of the Missouri Mid-South Conference OCWM (Our Church’s Wider Mission) Covenanted Ministry Team, I would like to thank your congregation for their 2020 OCWM contributions (thru 6/30) of $2950. This is actually an increase of $1950 compared to your 2019 contributions thru 6/30! We appreciate the increase, and lift up your faith in our work together.

Many new and exciting ministries are happening in our Conference, including:

- All-Conference Worship and fellowship events via Zoom
- Zoom support and information seminars for clergy twice each week
- Full worship services and worship pieces put together by Conference staff, including one featuring Conference youth and young adults, for your congregation to use as warranted in your context
- Special COVID-19 resources
- A weekly Conference devotional, shared with you each Wednesday
- The exciting ministry of our new Associate Conference Minister, Rev. Damien Lake, who started with our Conference 7/1
- Specialized Youth Ministry Resources and support
- Communications support for churches
- Association support

As well as the ongoing ministries of search and call, congregational support in times of challenge, clergy authorization and support, resourcing and social awareness that are provided by your Conference Covenanted Ministry Teams, Council and Staff.

All of these ministries are made possible by your continued support of Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM). If there is any way our Covenanted Ministry Team can answer any questions or be of support to you, please feel free to reach out to me, or another member of our team.

Your congregation is a blessed partner in our shared ministry as a Conference; and for that we are very grateful!

Blessings to you!

Rev. Rick Oberle, member
Missouri Mid-South Conference OCWM Covenanted Ministry Team
rick@columbiaucc.com
OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT OUR NEIGHBORS IN THE MARSHALLESE COMMUNITY:

“In the midst of the deadly pandemics, [we] invite you to hold in prayer and love the UCC churches in Springdale/ Fayetteville Arkansas from the Marshall Islands. There are 12,000 residents from the Marshall Islands who live in northwest Arkansas and work at Walmart, Tyson and other poultry plants. Recently, the new COVID-19 cases have increased at Tyson and the other poultry plants. Although the Marshallese community comprises 3% of the population in northwest Arkansas, they currently account for 50% of all deaths related to the coronavirus.

[We] can support the Marshallese UCC churches of our Conference in 2 ways:

- **Mission Opportunity**
  - Send money to the Conference to be used to purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) masks in bulk for the Marshallese community (*please put in the memo line – Marshallese pandemic support*)

- **Advocacy Opportunity**
  - Contact Tyson representatives and demand that their provide quarantine pay: [https://www.tysonfoods.com/contact-us](https://www.tysonfoods.com/contact-us)
  - Sign the MoveOn Petition to demand Tyson provide paid sick leave to plant workers with COVID-19 at MoveOn Petition Tyson COVID-19 employee pay

Let us embody our *Unifying Call draft* in this time with our Marshallese siblings!

‘*We are the United Church of Christ in Arkansas, Memphis and Missouri. United by Christ and led by the Holy Spirit, we support and empower one another in our unifying call to embody God’s love and mercy for all.*’

Learn more about the Arkansas Marshallese community at [https://www.mei.ngo/marshallese-in-arkansas](https://www.mei.ngo/marshallese-in-arkansas)

*The information for this article was copied from the MMSC eCourier, July 2, 2020*
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.

MISSION IN ACTION UPDATE
Go to our Mission in Action page on KUCC website to see the latest ways you can take action for social justice. www.kirkwooducc.org/mission-action

REGISTER TO VOTE

It is important that everyone take advantage of their right to vote. It is easy to register on-line by going to www.stlouisco.com/elections. The last day to register for the November 3 election is October 7, 2020. The last day that absentee applications will be accepted is October 21. The last day to apply to vote by mail is October 21. Be advised that it is recommended to give yourself one week for your application to arrive at its destination. It is also recommended that instead of using the bulk mail prepaid postage, to put two first class stamps on the applications. Please see the county website for any questions.
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)
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!

KIRK CARE 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

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Facebook us

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