



The Kenilworth Union Church

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www.kuc.org

Jane B. Lionberger
Associate Minister

Dr. Andrew Chaney
Senior Minister

Sarah E. Garcia
Associate Minister

Anne S. Faurot
Director of Children's Ministries

Dr. Gilbert W. Bowen
Minister Emeritus

Lisa R. Bond
Director of Music

The Service of Worship

Sunday, November 27, 2011

First Sunday of Advent & Communion Sunday

8:00 am Communion Service
9:00 and 10:30 am Worship Services & Sunday School

Prelude *Savior of the Nations Come*.....J. S. Bach

Call to Worship and the Organ Meditation

DoxologyNo. 592

Responsive Reading (selected verses from Psalm 25)

Make me to know your way, O Lord; teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.

Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from old.

Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the way.

He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way.

All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

Hymn "God of Grace and God of Glory"No. 420

Advent Reading and Candlelighting

Anthem *Welcome, Dear Redeemer*.....César Franck
Chancel Choir, Patrick Blackwell, Soloist

Prayer of Affirmation

Eternal God, in whom we live and move and have our being, we thank you that when we stray from your way you love us still. Pour out your love and mercy on us. Help us to draw near to you with reverent and humble hearts, confiding in your grace, that we may find in you our refuge and our strength; through Jesus Christ your Son. Amen.

First Lesson Matthew 21:33:46

Hymn "The God of Abraham Praise"No. 488

Pastoral Prayer and The Lord's Prayer

Offertory "For behold, darkness shall cover the earth"
and "The people that walked in darkness" from *Messiah*
.....G.F. Handel

Patrick Blackwell, Soloist

Hymn of Dedication

We praise thee, O God, our Redeemer, Creator,
In grateful devotion our tribute we bring.
We lay it before thee, we kneel and adore thee,
We bless thy holy name, glad praises we sing.

Second Scripture Lesson Proverbs 16: 2-3

Sermon "Check Your Priorities"Dr. Andrew D. Chaney

Invitation to the Table

Friends, this is the joyful feast of the people of God. They will come from east and west and from north and south and sit at table in the Kingdom of God.

See how good and pleasant it is when friends dwell together in unity.

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and The Lord's Prayer

Sharing of the Elements *Thee We Adore*.....Ralph M. Johnson

Prayer of Dedication

Recessional Hymn "In the Cross of Christ I Glory"No. 84

Benediction

Postlude *O Thou, of God the Father*.....J. S. Bach

Tamaron Conseur, M. M.
Asst. Dir. of Choirs

Dr. William Aylesworth
Guest Organist

Kelli Harrington, M. M.
Asst. Dir. of Rejoice and
Bell Choirs

USHERS

8:00 am
Phillis Dunbar

GREETERS

Jennifer and
Kevin Gazley

Kris and
Ken Fishman

USHERS

9:00 am
Carol Berry
John A. Dienner

Margaret Ann
Fowler

Shawn Hunt
Denise Hillinger

Bob Underwood
Bob Zabel

USHERS

10:30 am
Duff Peterson
Dianne Cook

Doug Cook
Craig Hallsteen

Ed King
Carl Mueller

LaDonna O'Donnell

ALTAR GUILD

Kathy and
Dick Denison

BUS ATTENDANT

Hyde Perce

A Stephen Ministry Congregation

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ALTAR FLOWERS: The flowers in the lavabo are given lovingly in thanksgiving for the life of Kenneth Lawrence Fox, Jr. by Betty and family.

MILESTONES: We welcomed to baptism on Friday, November 25 Ciara M. Palmer, daughter of Kathryn (Ross) and John Schooler Palmer. Today

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(CONTINUED)

Melissa Grace Hakewill will receive a blessing. She is the daughter of Megan (Walsh) and James William Hakewill, granddaughter of Hank and Mary Lois Hakewill.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES: First Sunday of Advent-Hope (Lambs -6th Grade). We use this season to instill four theological concepts. Hope is the first concept. Mary is visited by the angel who tells her that she has found favor with God and will have a baby. She is to name the baby Jesus; also called Emmanuel, which means God is with us. (6th graders will lead their chapel today.)

Mitten Tree: Our Mitten Tree is located at the front entrance. Please donate new mittens, scarves or hats or gently-used coats in dark colors and conservative patterns. These items will be donated to the Night Ministry for families in need.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANTS: will be Sunday, December 4: 3:00 pm for the 9:00 am Sunday School and 5:00 pm for the 10:30 Sunday School.

Pageant Rehearsal Schedule:

Saturday, Dec. 3:

- 9:00 am-Lambs through 2nd grade who attend 9:00 Sunday School
- 9:45 am-Rejoice Singers
- 10:30 am-Lambs through 2nd grade who attend 10:30 Sunday School
- noon-The Three Kings
- 12:30 pm-Mary and Joseph and Readers
- 1:00 pm-3rd Graders who attend 9:00 am Sunday School
- 2:00 pm-3rd Graders who attend 10:30 Sunday School

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES: At 11:00 am on Saturday, December 24, there will be a Homemade Nativity Service for young children and their families; Traditional candlelighting services will be at 3:00, 6:00, 9:00, and 11:00 pm in the Sanctuary. Childcare will be available at the 3:00 pm service only. Please call Children's Ministries at 853-2634 to make your baby-sitting reservation.

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON, Monday, December 5, 11:30 am. Come for a program celebrating KUC's 120th year! We'll have a special program entitled "Decades of Dresses." All are welcome! Think "inter generational" and invite your mom, grandmother, aunt, sister,

or special friend. Enjoy a lunch prepared by Jeannie B's Festive Catering. The cost is \$35 per person. RSVP to Michelle, 853-2004, mgutowski@kuc.org.

FIRST WEDNESDAYS, DEC. 7: We will be entertained by the New Trier Swing Choir at 11:30 am, followed by a festive Christmas luncheon. Please RSVP to the church office by Monday, December 5.

ADVENT CANDLELIGHTERS: If you and your family would like to participate in this KUC tradition, please leave your name and the service you are interested in at the KUC office (847) 251-4272.

HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR GIRLS: If you would like to be an Angel Candlelighter at one of the Christmas Eve services, please contact Silvi, silvi@kuc.org or (847) 853-2105.

USHERS NEEDED CHRISTMAS EVE: Please call Kate Robinson at 251-4272 by Dec. 16 if you would like to usher at 3:00, 6:00, 9:00, or 11:00 pm. It's a festive start to a special evening and a great way to greet old friends.

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE: We look forward to thanking all members who have made a commitment. We will be publishing the names of those who have pledged in the bulletin on Dec. 4. This list will include family names received in the church office through Nov. 30.

IMPACT: Attention all high schoolers. Applications are out for next year's mission program. For more information contact Sarah Garcia at sgarcia@kuc.org.

Preaching Schedule

Dec. 4-Dr. Chaney
Dec. 11-Dr. Chaney
Dec. 18 -Lessons & Carols
Dec. 24-Dr. Chaney
Dec. 25-Rev. Garcia, 10:00 service only.

Please turn off all electronic devices while attending services. Thank you.

The Care Guild Leader for November is Sallie Smith. To volunteer or to let us know where help is needed, please call the Care Guild number at (847) 853-3534 or email careguild@kuc.org.

Dr. Andrew Chaney "Come Before Winter" Selected verses from
II Timothy

Sometimes there isn't a very good reason why we don't do what we need to do. Like the man who was asked why he didn't repair the leak in his roof. He always said: "Well, when the sun is shining, I don't need it repaired, but when it is raining, it's too wet to work on it." It is so easy to put things off. Mark Twain said, "Never put off until tomorrow what you can do the day after tomorrow."

Two neighbors were talking across their backyard fence one afternoon and one said, "John, you know there is nothing like getting up at six o'clock in the morning doing a hundred sit-ups, two hundred push ups, a hundred chin-ups, taking a six mile run and then having a nice cold shower before breakfast." The other neighbor said, "Good grief. How long have you been doing that?" The man replied, "I start tomorrow." Yes, we all know people with this approach to life: "Ready. Aim. Aim. Aim." They aim to do something but just don't seem to be able to follow through. The book of Proverbs in the Bible tells the reader to consider how the ant "prepares her food in the summer and gathers her provision in the harvest." (6:6-8) But we really need a deadline to motivate us, don't we? We need an exact date and time, or a storm that is coming our way, or in Paul's case, a seasonal change.

Our scripture is a portion of a letter that Paul wrote from Rome to his protégé Timothy in Ephesus telling Timothy to bring some things before the season of winter begins. Paul asks for his coat and knows that if Timothy doesn't make the trip, he will have to wait another six months or so because the ports in the Mediterranean close in the winter.

Paul gave him a deadline- come before winter! We need deadlines in life, too. Seasons are nature's deadline, a slow transition into another time of the year with different weather. Growing up in Alabama we used to watch this one tree in our front yard. We used to watch the leaves fall. Each leaf that fell brought us closer to winter. We knew when winter was coming.

We don't know if Timothy responded to this letter quickly and caught the next boat and arrived before winter, or if he missed the boat--delayed....and arrived too late. This week I saw a

flyer from Refugee One, a benevolence agency that we support. It called for coats, mittens, hats, and gloves by November 1, before winter, before it is too late. It was a call for us to look at our surpluses and give to those who are less fortunate than we. When the cold comes, and this winter is supposed to be among the worst, how will those refugees who came here with nothing keep warm?

One of our benevolence agencies, Refugee One, is having a winter clothing drive, asking for hats, gloves, scarves, boots, coats, by this Tuesday, November 1. Like Paul did, they are asking for these items now, before winter, because they will be easier to distribute to the refugees before the snowy season hits. Perhaps we are called to clean out our surpluses and share today with those who need it most, because winter is coming. It is getting colder. What will keep someone warm who came here with nothing? Thoughts like these emphasize the pressure of winter's arrival. Winter brings an urgency to life, there is a cold coming that we can feel literally. Recently deceased genius, innovator, visionary, and perhaps the most beloved billionaire in the world, Steve Jobs, gave a Stanford commencement address in regard to his personal winter shortly after he was diagnosed with cancer.

He said, "When I was 17, I read a quote that went something like: "If you live each day as if it was your last, someday you'll most certainly be right." It made an impression on me, and since then, for the past 33 years, I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself: "If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?" And whenever the answer has been "No" for too many days in a row, I know I need to change something.

Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything, all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure - these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are

already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart.” Jobs goes on to say: “This was the closest I’ve been to facing death, and I hope it’s the closest I get for a few more decades. Having lived through it, I can now say this to you with a bit more certainty than when death was a useful but purely intellectual concept: No one wants to die. Even people who want to go to heaven don’t want to die to get there. And yet death is the destination we all share. No one has ever escaped it. And that is as it should be, because Death is very likely the single best invention of Life. It is Life’s change agent. It clears out the old to make way for the new. Right now the new is you, but someday not too long from now, you will gradually become the old and be cleared away. Sorry to be so dramatic, but it is quite true...Don’t let the noise of others’ opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary.”

What is kind of amazing is that Steve Jobs is as modern as you can be, yet he sounds a lot like Paul. Paul found his time to reflect while imprisoned. Jobs found his contemplation after being diagnosed with cancer. That time to reflect and contemplate is so important to life. We need to reflect about how our lives are going. People are living longer these days. We’ve added years to the life, but I wonder if, correspondingly, we have added life to the years. God will never measure our lives by the number of years that we have spent. He will measure them by the way we spent ourselves in those years.

We can’t let the years pass without taking care of what really matters. Perhaps today is the time to say to a friend, “Are we ok?” Or to write that letter or make that phone call to say: “I am sorry,” or to say the words that need to be said, “Please forgive me.” Or, “I appreciate you, I love you.” The days pile up, the leaves fall and suddenly, winter is here.

Even now, our dreams and visions call the present into question and make us realize that we are missing something. Some people have taken a very scientific approach in response to this feeling. You’ve heard of the book, “100 Places to Visit before You Die.” There are also many lists of things to do before you die and ways to check off what you have done. It is a great idea to have goals in life, and many experiences on these lists are worthy of checking off.

But we need to stop and reflect upon our lives to ensure that there is meaning and purpose somewhere along the way. If life becomes the pursuit of one thrill after another, life could feel emptier than ever as we lose ourselves in ourselves. What we need to pursue is becoming whole, getting right with God and with our neighbor.

The former author Madeleine L’Engle, wrote in her book *Walking on Water*: “Time is to be treasured, worked with, never ignored. As the astrophysicists understand time now, it is not like a river, flowing in one direction, but more like a tree, with great branches, and smaller limbs and twigs which may make it possible for us to move from one branch to another.”

Thinking about the parts of life as branches on a tree brings comfort, especially to those of us who have parts of our lives, branches, that are bare. If we feel that we have missed the boat, that winter has come, that one of the branches is bare, whether it is our family, our job, career, friends, direction in life, we know that the message of the Bible is mainly regeneration. We are called to get those leaves to grow back, to fill that branch again with the hope of spring. A proverb from the Indian Sanskrit has great truth for us: “Yesterday is but a dream; tomorrow only a vision; but today well-lived makes every yesterday a dream of happiness and every tomorrow a vision of hope.” Making today well lived means doing what needs to be done. William James said that “Nothing is so fatiguing as the eternal hanging on of an uncompleted task.” He was so right. It is exhausting to go through life with something that you need to do hanging over you.

Paul’s message to Timothy was so simple. He only asked him to round up his cloak, his books, and parchments before the winter freeze closed the ports. Maybe here on the north shore we don’t need to worry about ice closing the roads and keeping us from traveling. We know the roads will be cleared. It will get done. But there are other obstacles that hold us back. We need to remove those things from our lives. Dr. Martin Luther King, like Paul, did some of his best writing in a prison cell when he wrote “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” He knew how to reflect upon life, as he showed in other writings:

“We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history there is such a thing as being too

late. Procrastination is still the thief of time. Life often leaves us standing bare, naked and dejected with a lost opportunity. The "tide in the affairs of men" does not remain at the flood; it ebbs. We may cry out desperately for time to pause in her passage, but time is deaf to every plea and rushes on. Over the bleached bones and jumbled residue of numerous civilizations are written the pathetic words: "Too late." There is an invisible book of life that faithfully records our vigilance or our neglect. "The moving finger writes, and having writ moves on..."

Dr. King urged action! Much like Paul he never gave up. Or, as one of America's most famous cinematic boxers, Rocky Balboa, said, "It ain't over until it's over." In a recent interview, Sylvester Stallone was asked why so many people relate to the underdog Rocky. He said, the reason is simple. "We all stand alone in the ring of life, and nobody beats life. The test of our character, therefore, is not in how many hits we can give, but in how many hits we can take and still stand up and keep fighting. Until that last bell rings, we are in the fight of our lives - and we don't have the option to give up."

I admire the fighting spirit he described, as did Paul, who wrote, "I fought the good fight, I finished the race." Let us reflect on every branch of our lives so we can see what needs action. As winter approaches, recall those words of Steve Jobs and have the courage to follow your heart. May Dr. King's warning of the moving finger writing 'too late' motivate us to really search our souls and think about what we need to do, and then do it before that last leaf falls. Let us take action now, before winter. Amen.

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