



The Kenilworth Union Church

211 Kenilworth Avenue Kenilworth, Illinois 60043 (847)-251-4272
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, December 11, 2011

Third Sunday of Advent & Choral Music Sunday

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

Prelude *Echo Noel*.....Louis D' Aquin

Call to Worship and the Organ Meditation

DoxologyNo. 592

Advent Reading and Candlelighting

Hymn "Angels We Have Heard on High"No. 23

Special Music *Jessye's Carols, Movement I*.....Trad. Carols
.....Arr. Donald Fraser

*O Come, O Come Emmanuel
Once In Royal David's City
Unto Us a Child is Born
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
Good Christian Men Rejoice
O Holy Night
(Chancel Choir and Orchestra)*

Scripture Lesson Luke 1: 46b-55

Pastoral Prayer and The Lord's Prayer

Offertory *This Christmastide*.....Donald Fraser

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.

Sermon "Being God's Family"Dr. Andrew D. Chaney

Special Music *Jessye's Carols, Movement IV..Arr. Donald Fraser*
Angels We Have Heard on High
We Three Kings
Joy to the World
Adeste Fideles

Benediction

Postlude *Jig Fugue*.....J. S. Bach

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

John Bryant
Guest Organist

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

*Today's Special Music is a gift from
John and Mary Raitt*

USHERS

8:00 am
Phillis Dunbar

GREETERS

Wendy and
Keith Yamada

Jennifer and
Kevin Gazley

USHERS

9:00 am
Robert Cannon
Ron Balsbaugh
Karin Balsbaugh
Jeff Douthit
Marcie Paddock
Robert Paddock
Kate Van Dyke

USHERS

10:30 am
Mark F. Toledo
Mike Harper
Charlotte Meyer
David Sterrett
Allen Weaver
Justin Keith
Andrew Stone

ALTAR GUILD

Robert Cannon
Robert Emerson

BUS ATTENDANT

Jackie Barnes

A Stephen Ministry Congregation

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ALTAR FLOWERS: The altar arrangement in the sanctuary is given in loving memory of Phil and Marcia Thompson Leekley by their families. The flowers in the lavabo are in loving memory of Marcelitte Sterrett.

MILESTONES: We extend the sympathy of the congregation to the family of Patrick O'Neill upon his death on November 24. A memorial service for Mr. O'Neill will be held at 2:00 pm on Saturday, December 10 at Kenilworth Union Church. The rose on the altar on December 4 celebrated his life.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES: Third Sunday of Advent-Peace (Lambs-8th Grade) The infant, Jesus, is born in a humble place among animals and earthly people. He is called the Prince of Peace.

Mitten Tree: Our mitten tree is located in the vestibule. Please donate new mittens, scarves, hats or gently-used coats in dark colors and conservative patterns. These items will be given to The Infant Welfare Society.

High School Helper Christmas Party: Join us on December 18, 11:45 am at Homer's. Please bring a pair of mittens, a hat, or a scarf for our mitten tree.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(CONTINUED)

KUC CHRISTMAS PARTY: Today, December 11, come to the Culbertson Room at 4:00 pm. Come with your family and we'll decorate cookies for The Night Ministry. Enjoy holiday sweets and carols by the fire.

DECEMBER 18 IMPACT CHRISTMAS SERVICE PROJECT: Meet at 6 pm at the Warwick to join in spreading Christmas cheer to the disabled in Rogers Park. We will visit a rehabilitation center and hand out holiday treats and sing carols.

DOORS TO THE KUC ADMINISTRATIVE entrance will be inoperable during the week of December 12. We are installing automatic door openers. Please use the doors to the Sanctuary during this time.

REJOICE ART registration is underway. The program starts January 10 and lasts through Tuesday, March 13, 2012. The cost is \$150 per child. Forms are available in the Children's Ministries office.

CHRISTMAS EVE BABYSITTERS NEEDED: High school or college students are needed to help with child care at the 3:00 pm service. Please call Anne Faurot at (847) 853-2008 with questions, or afaurot@kuc.org.

BRIDGE is on December 13. After that, Intermediate Bridge will meet on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month, beginning with Jan. 10 and 24.

FIRST WEDNESDAYS: Join us on January 4. We are delighted that Paul Kasriel, chief economist for the Northern Trust, will join us again to review the current state of the economy. Please RSVP to the church by December 30.

HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR GIRLS: If you'd like to be an angel candlelighter on Christmas Eve, contact Silvi at silvi@kuc.org or (847) 853-2105.

USHERS FOR CHRISTMAS EVE: Please contact Kate Robinson by December 16 if you would like to usher at one of our Christmas Eve services, 3:00, 6:00, 9:00 or 11:00 pm.

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 are at 3:00, 6:00, 9:00 and 11:00 pm. Childcare will be available for ages up to 2 years old at 3:00 only. Reservations are required. Please call Children's Ministries at 853-2634.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25 AND SUNDAY, JANUARY 1: On Sunday, December 25 and January 1, services will be at 10:00 am in the Schmidt Chapel. Please feel free to have your children attend the worship service with you on these two Sundays. Sunday school will resume on Sunday, January 9.

KUC WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY, Wednesday afternoons: We are starting a new 9-week session on January 11 studying the Book of Daniel. Please contact Traci Groff with questions, tracigroff@comcast.net.

SAVE THE DATE: Sunday, Jan. 22, 5 pm is our annual Winter Warm Up Soup Supper. This is a fund-raiser for the high school mission trip to New Orleans. Tickets are \$8 per person or \$20 per family.

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

Preaching Schedule

Dec. 18-Lessons & Carols
Dec. 24-Dr. Chaney
Dec. 25 -Rev. Garcia, only one service at 10:00 am
Jan. 1-Rev. Lionberger, only one service at 10:00 am
Jan. 8-Dr. Chaney

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

The Care Guild Leader for December 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.

Rev. Jane Lionberger "Jesus' Rules of the Road"

I vividly recall the experience of waiting at Midway for a Southwest flight to I Denver some years ago. The plane was late, and all 125 of us were well aware of what awaited us over the next hour or so, and I'm sure, like me, everyone else wasn't looking forward to it. We knew we had to wait for the plane to come in and passengers to deplane and the crews to clean and stock the airplane before we could board and take off. The patient people sat looking out the window waiting for the plane to arrive. The rest of us paced back and forth checking our watches and looking anxious. This was well before cell phones, and so no one was talking or texting and surfing the Internet. We were all stuck, with nothing to do, imagining a long wait and a late arrival on the other end. Would people be able to make their appointments in Denver or their connections? We didn't know.

I sighed with relief when the plane finally pulled up to the terminal, but I was also keenly aware that boarding the plane with tired and anxious fellow passengers was not going to be fun. Because Southwest didn't give assigned seats to its passengers, I anticipated everyone jostling and pushing to get the best place in line in order to get the best seat and a convenient overhead bin for their luggage. Realizing that the plane had arrived, everyone began to crowd up to the gate when a voice came over the loud speaker. "Good afternoon passengers," it said. "I have a challenge to put before all of you today. You are well aware that your plane has come in late. However, if you all pull together and cooperate with one another, there is a chance we can get this plane off the ground in time to make it to the destination on schedule. So what I want you to do is line up quickly and orderly, have your boarding pass ready to show to the crew and then board the plane with the first in line going all the way to the back of the plane and then filling in the seats row by row from the back to front. Please help each other as you take your seats and stow your luggage away. If you work together we can make this happen. So let's see if we can do it!"

Instantly the mood of the crowd was transformed. Anxious looks turned to smiles as we all took up the challenge. We began to actually look at one another and laughing and talking

together. What we had thought would be an unpleasant game of push and shove became an opportunity to enjoy helping one another and seeing if, by working together, we could accomplish the challenge before us. When the plane took off and the pilot announced we would be at our destination on time the whole plan erupted in clapping, whistles and cheers. We had done it and not only would we be on time, we had actually enjoyed the experience. We had become a community in the half hour it had taken us to board.

Now, no one on that Southwest plane was consciously aware that we were building a community as we rose to the challenge of boarding quickly but we certainly had a common interest and a goal. Everyone sacrificed the chance to choose the best seat, and we all became vulnerable as we engaged one another in conversation, asking for or offering help. Strangers held children for mothers, younger people lifted luggage into bins for older passengers and single travelers gave up seats for families. As we settled into our seats there was conversation all around as people began talking to one another about the enjoyment of facing the challenge together.

Communities come in all different shapes and sizes. Some are political, others social or religious. Some come together for a short time and others have a history that spans generations. There is the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the Belly Dancers of Color, The Harley-Davidson Owners Group and the Union of Concerned Scientists. There are online communities, book groups and Bible Studies, dance troupes and traveling choirs. All are communities brought together by a common interest, a goal, and usually some kind of challenge, which together build relationships of vulnerability and sacrifice.

Christian community is created through the same dynamics of having a goal or challenge and developing a vision of how to get there. When a community displays the characteristics of sacrifice and vulnerability, it demonstrates how all these dynamics come together to create relationships of meaning. Walter Brueggemann describes the central vision of the bible as one in which "all of creation is one, every creature in community with every

other, living in harmony and security toward the joy and well-being of every other creature”

If you were to look back over the history of Christianity, you would see that central vision is the very reason it survived through the first few centuries after Jesus. In his book, *The Rise of Christianity*, Rodney Stark, teacher of sociology and comparative religion asks this question: “How did a tiny and obscure messianic movement from the edge of the Roman Empire dislodge classical paganism and become the dominant faith of Western civilization?” His answer might surprise you. [W]hen asked for a single sentence answer he writes: “The Christians introduced into a world of hatred and cruelty a totally new concept about humanity – that you had a responsibility to be compassionate and caring to everyone.”

The book of Acts tells us about the formation of the early church and the obstacles that the church faced and worked to overcome. “About that time, while the number of disciples continued to increase, a complaint arose. Greek-speaking disciples accused the Aramaic-speaking disciples because their widows were being overlooked in the daily food service.” There were those who were being neglected in the community because everyone was out preaching the gospel and no one was caring for others. So the disciples asked the community to select 7 men to dedicate themselves to caring for the widows, orphans and all who were needy. Stephen, after whom Stephen Ministry is named, was chosen to be their leader and organizer. Aware that they were not following Jesus’ rules of the road these leaders of the early church put his command to love into action.

Today most Christian communities are identified by their beliefs rather than their actions. In “A People’s History of Christianity” author Diana Butler Bass cites a 2007 study in which three-quarters of young churchgoers (those inside the faith) identified Christianity as judgmental, hypocritical, out of touch, insensitive, boring and exclusive – the antithesis of love. Many church communities have rules about membership that exclude those who don’t adhere to a set of specific beliefs. But Jesus didn’t have a lot of rules about what we are to believe. Instead he focused how we were to behave in relationship to God and the rest of humanity. When asked by the Pharisees to name the first and greatest commandments Jesus quoted the Hebrew Bible, “You must love the Lord

your God with all your heart, with all your being and with all your mind. And the second is like it: You must love your neighbor as you love yourself. All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands.” Luke adds to this saying in his Gospel, “Do this and you will live.” According to Stark this became the mission statement for the early church...to love one another.

Since the time of Jesus people have written volumes about what it means to be a Christian and part of a Christian community. Marcus Borg believes that being a Christian is very simple...it’s about loving God and what God loves, becoming the kind of person who can love God and love what God loves, and finally it is being part of a community of transformation. Transformation is a process, he says, of “re-socialization so that our sense of ourselves, our identity, is shaped by involvement with the community. In order for that transformation to happen, we need to be open to one another, to listen to one another, and to share our joys and sorrows with one another.

Here at Kenilworth Union church we have people who willingly step forward to listen to and to share in the joys and sorrows of others. But that is just one side of love. Love is never a one-way street. Love at its best is the practice of encountering one another and the mutual sharing of joys and sorrows.

There is a story about an elder who lived alone and undertook a seventy-week fast, eating only once a week during that time in order to become more receptive to God. When he was little more than skin and bone he asked God to reveal to him the meaning of a certain bible passage, but God wouldn’t do it. The elder, disappointed by how little his fast had done for him decided to go ask one of his brothers what the passage meant. The minute he closed the door to his cell, an angel of God appeared to him, telling him that his seventy-week fast did not bring him one step closer to God, but now that he had humbled himself enough to go to his brother, God sent the angel to reveal the meaning of the passage. Then the angel told the elder what it meant and went away. Barbara Brown Taylor writes about this story that she, “likes to think that the elder went on to visit his brother anyway, breaking his fast with him and swapping stories about what a trickster God was. At the very least,” she continues, “most of us need someone to tell our stories to. At a deeper level, most of us need someone to help us forget ourselves, a

little or a lot. The great wisdom traditions of the world all recognize that the main impediment to living a life of meaning is being self-absorbed." Dr. Andrew Weil writes, "Human beings are highly social, communal animals. We are meant to live in families, tribes and communities and when we lack those connections, we suffer. Yet many people pride themselves on their independence and habitually distance themselves from others."

We know the blessings of giving but the challenge for many of us is to know the joy of receiving as we make ourselves vulnerable to one another by asking for help or being willing to accept help when it is offered. Accepting that help can make a world of difference. And when we are open to each other it is a holy moment, a time when God speaks to us through one another, even though we may not know it. Authentic encounter was a gift that Jesus taught to his disciples. Too often it is a gift we ignore because of fear, pride, greed or a sense of competition.

Day in and day out, as we live in the presence of other people, we have the opportunity to practice loving each other as we love ourselves, to come "face-to-face with another human being - and at least entertaining the possibility that this is one of the faces of God," says Taylor. What we have most in common with each other is "not religion but humanity. I learned this from my religion," she continues, "which also teaches me that encountering another human being is as close to God as I may ever get - in the eye-to-eye thing, the person-to-person thing - which is where [Jesus] has promised to show up. Paradoxically, the point is not to see him. The point is to see the person standing right in front of me, who has no substitute, who can never be replaced, whose heart holds things for which there is no language, whose life is an unsolved mystery."

This community is a place where we can challenge ourselves to live authentically and to encounter one another in all our beauty and ugliness and in all our joy and sorrow in order to be transformed. Waiting at that Southwest gate on our way to Denver, a disparate group of people was transformed into a community as we joyfully set out to accomplish the task given to us and encountered one another eye-to-eye, person-to-person. The experience made such an impression on me, I've never forgotten it. I pray that here at Kenilworth Union you can be a community of vision and purpose where

you genuinely encounter one another and love one another as you travel together on your journey of faith and transformation.

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