



The Good News

A Newsletter for Friends and Members
of Kirkland Congregational United Church of Christ
December 2017



A Progressive Christian Voice in the Heart of Kirkland

An Open and Affirming Congregation * Member of Greater Kirkland Ecumenical Parish
A Greening Congregation * Affiliated with the Center for Progressive Christianity
An Advocating Congregation of the Faith Action Network

From our Pastor:

Dear Church,

As most of you know I believe the church has a significant role in civic and community life. While we are bound by law and conscience to align the church with no particular political party or candidate, we are called to speak and act faithfully, such that our faith is lived out in the world. There is a balance to be found—between the public calls of faith and the individual work that faith requires. I try to find the sweet spot in the middle, but it is a struggle for me, and many of you have noted the same. Sometimes, trying to faithfully respond to the needs of the world is painful and overwhelming, and truthfully I have reached a point where I am finding myself exhausted and angry amid the current realities. When gun violence at concerts and churches results in no real discussion of reasonable gun control, when tax cuts for the wealthy are proposed while people go hungry, and when religious bigotry is pushed from the highest office in our nation, I believe our faith calls us to speak up and act. But when our faith calls us to speak up and act, I believe we need to constantly remember who we are and whose we are.

And that is why I feel the need for Advent more than ever this year. I need Advent so that when I am overwhelmed by the events of the world I can remember that through the birth of Jesus our God ushered goodness and hope into the world—to sustain us and to make love visible and real. I need Advent so that I can remember that even though the coming of the Christ child was scary, at least for Mary and Joseph, that I can find hope in the midst of the things that fill me with fear. I need Advent so that I can once again be reminded of the joy that came in the birth of all children, and thus remember that this is a season to remember God's goodness and delight. I need Advent so that I can remember that Jesus comes as the Prince of Peace—which calls me to seek peace when I am tempted to buy into anger, cynicism, and division. I need Advent because I need to be reminded that the love of God is the antidote to the hatred of bullets and bullies, and we are called to share that love, rather than give in to hatred.



I also need Advent so that I can put the world aside and revel in the songs, the colors, and the traditions of this season. I need Advent so that I can spend time with beloved friends and family and be strengthened by those relationships and our shared laughter. I need Advent because in the simple beauty of the story of the birth of Christ I see God anew every year. I don't know why, when I know the story so well...but I do. And so I need Advent, and I am glad it begins THIS Sunday (December 3rd).

Advent is here and the Christ child is coming...what do you need during this holy season?

With grace and peace,

~Ryan

P.S. I hope to see you in worship to share in the pageantry and magic of the Advent season!



December 2017 Events:

There are many special events for our congregation to participate in during the month of December. These events are opportunities for you to give to our community and our church family.

*Sunday, December 3rd

1st Sunday of Advent~ with lighting of the first Advent Candle

Worship ~ 10:30am

Advent Fellowship Event for All Ages—following worship:

Lunch is provided!

- *“The Hanging O’ the Greens”*

We will decorate the Sanctuary and Lounge and share lunch together.

- *Ornament Making—Make It; Take It*

7 different ornaments to choose from.

- *“Tree of Angels” ~ The Tree of Angels will be up and the gift tags will be placed on the tree and available after worship for your choosing.*

- *Advent Home Candle Lighting Guide* available in narthex

- *Advent Prayer Tree* will be placed in the narthex

*Sunday, December 10th

2nd Sunday of Advent

Worship ~ 10:30am

- *Youth Event at Bellevue UCC 6:00—8:00pm*

*Sunday, December 17th

3rd Sunday of Advent

Worship ~ 10:30am

- *Special Presentation of the Christmas Story*
- *“Tree of Angels” gifts need to be returned to KCC to be distributed to Attain Housing*

*Sunday, December 24th

4th Sunday of Advent

Worship ~ 10:30am

- *Christmas Eve worship service in the Sanctuary: Candlelight Service ~ 7:00pm*



*Sunday, December 31st

New Year’s Eve Day

- *No Sunday School Classes*

*Sunday, January 7, 2018

Epiphany Worship Service ~ 10:30am



Watch for special fliers with information about each of these events.



Advent Prayer Tree



Throughout the Season of Advent, we invite you to offer prayers for others. The tree will be placed in the narthex. Take an Advent symbol from the basket, write a name or prayer request on the symbol, and hang it on the Advent tree. Include these names and prayer requests that have been placed on the tree in your personal prayers.

"Journey Through Advent,"

An *Advent Home Candle Lighting Guide*, for your personal use at home, will be available in the narthex on the first Sunday of Advent, December 3rd.



2017 Christmas Pageant December 17th

For our Christmas Pageant this year, we are going to change it up a bit, with the

“No Stress, No Fuss Christmas Pageant”



Everyone - adults and children, will be able to participate at your own comfort level — whether it is wearing a costume or singing in the pews. The whole program allows room for telling the story, singing carols and dressing up in costumes.

As you arrive for worship, you can choose the costume for the character you would like to play. Did you always want to play Mary or Joseph? This will be your opportunity, even if we have more than one Mary or Joseph. Or you may choose

to be an angel, a shepherd, an animal, a wise man, or an innkeeper or towns person.



During the telling of the story, each of the characters will come forward at the appropriate time. Familiar hymns and carols will be sung by everyone, adding to the magical experience.



It all takes place during the 10:30am worship service on December 17th. Arrive early to get the costume for your desired character.



Jr./Sr. High Youth Events Saturday, December 2nd

- 10:00am– Service Project for Sibling House
Meet at KCC UCC in Helliwell Room
- **Sunday, December 10th**
at Bellevue UCC from 6:00-8:00pm

A Candle Light Advent Reflection service and worship for youth 6-12th grade and adult chaperones. It will be an evening of music, candle lighting and reflection on the light and darkness of the season. A time of fellowship will follow the service.



Our Common Cents Fund at Work

In November, the funds you contributed to the Common Cents Fund were used for 2 different projects: 1.) sweet potatoes, cans of Cream of Mushroom soup, and cans of Evaporated Milk for the Hopelink Thanksgiving Baskets were purchased on your behalf.

An organization called Nourishing Networks provides large boxes of food for families of school children to keep them fed with nutritious food during the school vacation breaks. 2.) Using the Common Cents Fund, we were able to provide 2 boxes of food. Items included fresh fruit and vegetables, rice, instant oatmeal, peanut butter, canned fruit and veggies, crackers, applesauce, cooking oil, and soup.

Thank you to Dick J. for delivering the boxes to the drop off location.

Also, thank you to Pat J. for delivering your donations to Camp Unity. She made two trips during November.

December Mission Project

27th Annual Tree of Angels



On the first Sunday of Advent, Sunday, December 3rd, our Tree of Angels, will be in placed in the Lounge.

The Tree of Angels is decorated with gift tags ~ each bearing the first name, age, and wish of a person in a family with which we are linked in a partnership with **Attain Housing**, formerly known as KITH (Kirkland Interfaith Transitions in Housing.) We will have 12 children and adults represented on the tree this year.

The Tree of Angels works like this: You take a gift tag that fits your budget,....read the wish,....find a present which comes close to filling it,.... wrap the gift,.... label it with the name and the original gift tag, ...and... place it back under the tree **no later than Sunday, December 17th.**

Gifts will also be purchased using the "**Common Cents Fund.**" If you are unable to get out to shop or have limited funds, you can still participate in this meaningful project by making a donation to the "Common Cents Fund" and then we will do the shopping for you.



The UCC Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund is a unique Special Mission Offering of the United Church of Christ that affords us an opportunity to recognize and honor those who serve our beloved Church.

Our joy at Christmas is a response to God's promise of new life through the birth of Jesus. It is a joy we are called to share widely, through our witness and gifts, both to loved ones and to distant neighbors. One of the special aspects of the Christmas Fund is that the funds do not support programs, make grants to institutions, or fund advocacy programs, but rather, they provide direct financial assistance to individual UCC clergy and lay employees.

Your gift to the Christmas Fund will also provide for the supplementation of Small Annuities, supplementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants, and provide Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks next December to low-income retirees. We will collect this special offering at both services on Christmas Eve. Please give generously!



SJV Christmas Tree Sale:

Help support a local high school youth group earn their way to Tijuana to build homes.

Thirteenth annual tree sale has started and runs through December 21st.

Where: St. John Vianney Church,
12600 84th Ave NE,
Kirkland, 98034

Hours: Monday-Friday 4-8:00pm
Saturday 9-7:00pm Sunday 9-5:00pm

Questions or special orders: Ken Goodwin
[425.466.4460](tel:425.466.4460), goodwin.hp@gmail.com



Women's Holy Spirit Poetry Group

December 11th
Helliwell Room
7:00 - 9:00pm



Please note:

**No Sunday School
classes
for children
on Sunday,
December 31st**



Faith Uncorked is a small gathering of folks who come together to share in conversation about various faith topics, from the perspective of progressive Christian theology. Come and experience wonderful, thoughtful, and at times, challenging discussions, while respecting each persons' point of view. Enjoy tasty hors d'oeuvres and a glass of wine or non-alcoholic beverage.

Where: Home of Gale P.
Kirkland

When: Tuesday, December 12th
7:00 PM

Bring: Your favorite bottle of wine or non-alcoholic beverage, & an hors d'oeuvre to share

**Don't keep it bottled up
— Uncork your Faith!!**

*An Ancient Tradition • A New way
Exploring faith through music, food, and community*



THE TABLE

**The Table
Sunday, Dec. 17th
5:30pm
Fellowship Hall**

Advent – A Meditation



Dear KCC-UCC membership, friends, and supporters,

I would like you, as the blessed season of Advent comes upon us, to consider taking up a meditation, or perhaps a discipline, a journey or a challenge to help prepare your heart and mind for the coming of our Holy Savior, in maybe a way you have not considered before. This quiet beginning of the church year, is a perfect time to consider the musical treasures of this season. Not yet the joyful bombast of Christmas, and about as far from the national, commercialized vision of so many shopping days left as you can find, Advent is a rich, introspective season of its' own, the "other" penitential season, though very different in character from Lent. The darkness is real though, both figuratively, as we the people who wandered in darkness, began to see a great light, and physically, as people who live in the same northern dim, as did the writers of lots of the famous Advent carols: In The Bleak Mid-winter, Lo, How A Rose, Comfort, Comfort Ye, My People, etc...

One particular thought for preparing for the return of the Sun and The Son, is to give the four weeks and the Eve of Christ, to explore a short commitment to singing in the choir? What better Advent journey than that? The camaraderie of singing with others in quiet wonder as the season unfolds, the short commitment span (four Sundays), singing in the choir on Christmas Eve (your family will be so proud!).



I invite anyone who has ever even had a passing desire to check out what church choir is all about to consider this as *your* Advent preparation, the journey through your own personal wilderness, a musical cleansing of your heart, and reconnection to what makes this a truly magical season, free from commercial corruption! We will be singing mainly some of the most beloved carols of the season as anthems over these weeks of internal preparation for that blessed day that Christ returns to us, and we can celebrate this together as human beings lifting our collective voices in the most powerful expression that voices can create, the unified power of song!



(continued next column)

Rehearsals are on Sunday mornings at 9:30 am.

Thanks for considering my invitation. I hope to see a few of you at Sunday morning practice!

Please pass this on to anyone who may not be on our server list for the newsletter, but should know of this invitation. Have a blessed Advent!

Jim P.
Music Director - KCC UCC



Committee Meetings

Christian Education Committee:

Next meeting date is:
Monday, December 18th
at 7:00pm at Gale P's

The KCC Council:

Next meeting date is:
Wednesday, January 10, 2018
Helliwell Room at 7:00pm

Note that there is NO Church Council meeting in December.

Looking ahead:

Our Congregational Budget Meeting will be held immediately following worship on January 28th. Please plan to attend this important meeting.

Congregational Meeting



Mid-Winter Retreats at Pilgrim Firs:



For Youth

Theme: Sexuality & Your Faith

Program content during these midwinter retreats will include developmentally appropriate and medically accurate information about bodies and relationships, the Bible and our faith, sexual identity, and more.

January 6—7, 2018 ~ Jr. High Mid-Winter (grades 6-8) (7pm Friday to 1pm Sunday)

January 12—14, 2018 ~ Sr. High Mid-Winter (grades 9-12) (7pm Friday to 1pm Sunday)

Registration fee for each of these camps is \$140. .

Register at www.ultracamp.com/Info/upcomingSessions.aspx. Camp Scholarship funds (50% of registration fee) are available for *all* KCC UCC youth attending a PNC Conference Mid-Winter Retreat.

Registration deadline is December 17, 2017

For Men—Save the Date

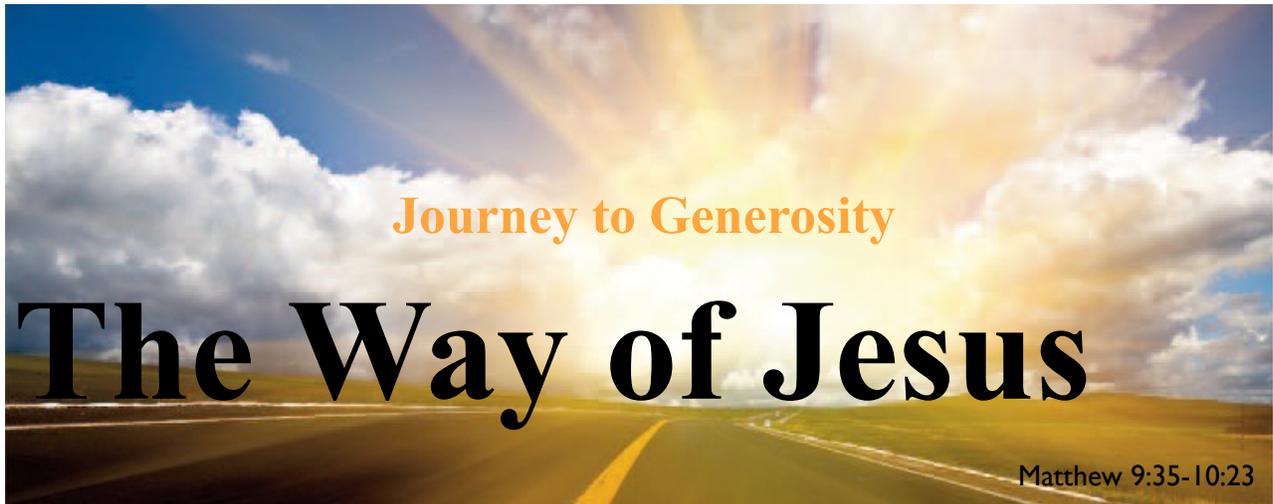
Pacific Northwest Conference 27th Annual Men's Retreat 2018

Theme: Male Relationships: When We Were Boys

February 2—4, 2018

We will start out talking about those friendships that were so meaningful to us and reflect on how they shaped us for life as adults. There will also be a ***Day of Silence*** beginning on Thursday evening, February 2nd to the afternoon of February 3rd.

Registration information will be available in early December. Save the dates and pass the word along to the men you know and love. For further information, contact Rick Russell, at myrtos@comcast.net. Camp Scholarship funds (50% of registration fee) are available for *all* KCC UCC men attending a PNC Conference Mid-Winter Retreat.



JOURNEY TO GENEROSITY: THE WAY OF JESUS

“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

One virtue of this passage for today’s church, with respect to stewardship, is that it underlines the importance of making as clear a choice as possible in using resources in favor of the Realm of God. Individuals, households, and congregations become clearer and deeper in stewardship commitment when we make a deliberate “Yes.”

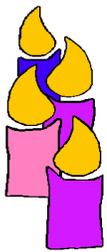
By making a strong pledge of time, talent, money, and other resources, we reinforce others who have already done so, and we encourage those who have not done as much to do the same. Another virtue of the passage is that it underscores the fact that our choices have long-term consequences.

We may not believe that failure to give to the church is going to keep us out of heaven, but we certainly know that investing money in the work of ministry and mission on behalf of others improves the quality of life in our community. It also directly benefits us with a sense of purpose, overall well-being, and being a part of something that is larger than ourselves. It is good for us!

To accept the command of Jesus to engage in bringing wholeness to a fragmented world is to be on a mission that matters. It is a mission that is not without risk, cannot be taken without deep personal commitment, and requires that we ultimately trust God to provide what we need. Then again, most things that matter in life are not necessarily easy or without effort.



Please bring your pledge card to church on Sunday, December 10th.



Living the Seasons of Advent and Christmas



Advent ~ Season of hopeful waiting

Welcome to the first season of the church calendar. This is a time of waiting, of hoping, and of expectation. It is a time of listening for God's loving response. There is much to look forward to – gifts, special food, visitors, and parties. Yet this is a holy time. We remember centuries of hopeful expectation for the Messiah. We resolve to create an atmosphere of hope, peace, joy, and love in our hearts, our homes, and our relationships while we look forward to the promise and wonder of Jesus.

In Advent, we adorn our celebrations with the colours blue or purple, and count down the season with symbols of wreaths and calendars. Create space for some quiet family time each week. In this way, we focus our hearts and minds on the coming of the Christ.

What longing do you hear in these words? What assurance do you hear in these words about God's comfort and presence? What do you hear in these passages about the mystery of "God with us"?

December 3rd – 1st Sunday of Advent; Two-sided Coin

Isaiah 64:1–9
Psalm 80:1–7, 17–19
1 Corinthians 1:3–9
Mark 13:24–37



Something to think about, talk about, or do

In the call for God to come and break through into the lives of the people, the prophet speaks for the people who have returned home from exile to a changed landscape and patterns of behavior that do not reflect the way of God. The people hoped and believed that God would come again into their lives and change them and their community to mirror God's ways of justice, peace, and mercy for all in need. The people longed for things to change.

Together this week

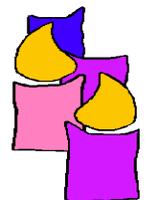
*Invite each person to name something in the world they hope will change. *Talk with a friend about what peace and justice look like to you. Listen to what peace and justice look like to your friend.

Prayer

Holy One, we wait longingly for the time when we live in harmony with your will for the world. Amen.

December 10th – 2nd Sunday of Advent; God's Way of Love Lasts Forever

Isaiah 40:1–11
Psalm 85:1–2, 8–13
2 Peter 3:8–15a
Mark 1:1–8



Something to think about, talk about, or do

Listen! Shout! Look! Isaiah calls us to joyful action. God is going to change the world, and we can be helpers. We can join our voices and add our actions to help make a better world. God's love and care are for everyone, and God's way of love lasts forever. We can help spread the good news.

Together this week

What message do you want to express to the world?

*Write a message of love and hope and include it with Christmas cards you may be sending.

Prayer

Transforming God, thank you for inviting us into change. We know that your world is a world of hope and justice for all. Thank you for those who have been God's message of hope to us. Help us to do our part to bring a message of hope to the world. Amen.

December 17th – 3rd Sunday of Advent; Shout With Joy

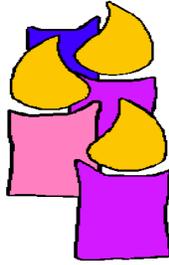
Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11

Psalm 126

or Luke 1:46b–55

1 Thessalonians 5:16–24

John 1:6–8, 19–28



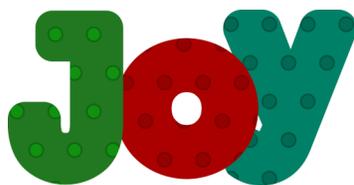
Something to think about, talk about, or do

God has done great things! What can we do to express our joy and gratitude? We rejoice with song and with laughter. This news is too good to keep to ourselves – let's share it with everyone. Let's shout out the good news. Our God is a loving God! God blesses us. Rejoice!

Together this week

*Invite each household member to describe one thing that brings them joy. Think about ways that joy can be expressed.

*Choose a family activity that will bring joy to others (such as volunteer in your community, visit those who are homebound, share gifts of food, offer to help neighbours). The list of ways to spread joy is endless!



Prayer

Joyful God, we lift our voices in praise! You have done wonderful things – thank you!

Send us into the world in faith and with joy to share your wonderful love. Amen.

December 24th – 4th Sunday of Advent; Here I Am

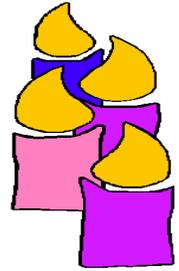
2 Samuel 7:1–11, 16

Luke 1:46b–55

or Psalm 89:1–4, 19–26

Romans 16:25–27

Luke 1:26–38



Something to think about, talk about, or do

This is an amazing story of God's grace and an extraordinary young woman. Mary says "yes" to God's purpose and vision and becomes an agent of God's liberating love. Mary turns toward God in faith and follows the path before her, proclaiming her devotion to God, God's opposition to oppressive power, and the "great reversal" to come.

This is a story to inspire us, to fill us with gratitude and joy, and sing of God's steadfast love and faithfulness.

Together this week

*What are some ways we can be agents of God's liberating love?

*Have a family affirmation time to name and honour each person's unique gifts. We are each a promise to the world. How will we use our gifts and talents to serve God?

*As the story of Mary shows, life can be completely changed in a moment. When everything is up in the air, it's good to have people around who can help us stay grounded.

Prayer

Surprising God, our hearts are open to receive you. Let there be born in us gratitude and joy to serve you in impossible ways.

Grant us grace and courage to become all that you mean for us to be. Amen.



Christmas ~



Season of God's presence

Emmanuel, God with us, Jesus, is born. We are joyful and grateful yet again for the generosity of a loving God. In songs, prayers, and family celebrations, we rejoice in God's gift of love to the world.

During the 12 days of Christmas, we celebrate the light of the world has come to us. We use the symbol of the crèche to remind us of the wonderful story and we light the Christ candle to honour the One who blesses us.

December 25th – Christmas; Joy to the World

Isaiah 52:7–10
Psalm 98
Hebrews 1:1–4, (5–12)
John 1:1–14



Something to think about, talk about, or do

This Christmas Day we hear again the call for all people, and all creation to witness God's salvation at work and "take up the song" to praise God. This crescendo of celebration sings in awe of God who comes to us in Jesus to bring a new kind of justice – one of mercy and fair, compassionate judgment. Joy to the world!

Many Christians work for social justice, or fairness for all people, within our communities and around the world. We can catch similar glimpses of God's justice for the natural world.

Prayer

Gracious God, we thank you for the gift of Jesus. We thank you for the joy and beauty of this season. May we be mindful of people most in need of the good news of Christmas. Send your Spirit to bless our gatherings and celebrations. We pray in the name of the baby born in Bethlehem, Jesus the Christ. Amen.



Joy to the World

December 31st – New Beginnings

Isaiah 61:10—62:3
Psalm 148
Galatians 4:4–7
Luke 2:22–40



Something to think about, talk about, or do

All babies are a gift. But in the description of the ritual in the temple, we understand the special gift of Jesus to the world. Simeon and Anna may be like the older relatives with whom we are sharing Christmas. They are loved by us and show us many ways to worship God and love the people around us. They help us to recognize God at work. The joy of Anna and Simeon is our own as we, too, welcome the birth of the Christ.

Together this week

*Talk about gifts given and received for Christmas this year. What is your favorite and why? Did you receive a gift for which you have been waiting and wishing? How does it feel to finally receive it? How is Jesus a gift for us?



*Imagine the size of God's love that inspired such a gift. How might this gift inspire us to now be in the world?

Prayer

Generous God, thank you for this incredible gift. We welcome Jesus the Christ with open hearts and hands. In Jesus, you sent a promise of hope and peace. We celebrate this gift with joy. Amen.



Kirkland Congregational Church Prayer List



In your time with God this week, please lift up the following people in prayer:

Family & friends of Ellen Z
Carrie C
Lisa G
Jani G
Barbara L
Winter L
Verna T

Don B
Ele N
Ruth W
Brenda B
Dorris K
Ruth R

Sarah J
Kerry R
LaVerne F
Jerry R
Judy H
Donna C
Mary C

Victims of abuse

Victims of crimes and violence
Residents of Camp Unity

Victims of natural disasters
Residents of Tent City4

Please contact the church office to add someone to the prayer list or to have a name removed. Call 425.822.3811 or email kccucc.office@gmail.com.

Christmas Poem

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,
The work of Christmas begins:
 To find the lost
 To heal the broken
 To feed the hungry
 To rebuild the nations
 To bring peace among the people
 To make music in the heart.

.... Howard Thurman

(Howard Thurman was an African-American author, professor, and spiritual advisor for Martin Luther King.)

Merry



Christmas

and

Happy



New Year