

August 15, 2021

St. Mark's United Church of Christ

St. James United Church of Christ

Rev. Dr. Karl Kuhn Organist: Ann Rodewald

Reader at St Mark's: Sandy Perronne

Meditative Music

Bells Ring

Prelude Gathering for Worship:

Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways

Call to Worship: (responsively)

L: Almighty and everlasting God,

P: In whom we live and move and have our being,

L: You created us for yourself,

P: So that our hearts are restless until they find rest in you.

L: In your light may we see life clearly

P: And in your service find perfect freedom; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Opening Prayer: (All together)

(Excerpted from Richard Allen, African Methodist Episcopal Bishop, U.S.A.)

We believe, O Lord, that you have not abandoned us to the dim light of our own reason to conduct us to happiness, but that you have revealed in Holy Scriptures whatever is necessary for us to believe and practice. How noble and excellent are the precepts, how sublime and enlightening the truth, how persuasive and strong the motives, how powerful the assistance of your holy religion. Our delight shall be in your statutes, and we will not forget your Word. *Amen.*

Doxology

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen

Hymn of Life: (#5 Binder)

Blessed Assurance

Prayer of Confession:

How easily we leave your side, Lord God, for a place far away.

We are blind in our darkness, so open our eyes to our sins.

Unless you strengthen our spirits and create our hearts anew,
we cannot make the journey home.

Guide us to your welcoming arms, to the music and the dancing,
for we are easily lost, and only you, our God, can find us. *Amen*

Words of Assurance: (All together)

God of the lost, the least, and all who long for home,

When we wander from your ways and waste the gifts you have given us,

You welcome us back, so that we may celebrate and rejoice in your presence
forever; through Jesus Christ your beloved Son. *Amen*

Affirming our Faith Together: The Apostles' Creed: (All together)

**I believe in God the Father, Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth:**

And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord:

**Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary:**

Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead and buried:

He descended into hell:

The third day he rose again from the dead:

He ascended into heaven,

And sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty:

From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead:
I believe in the Holy Spirit:
The One Holy Universal Christian Church:
the communion of saints:
The forgiveness of sins:
The resurrection of the body:
And the life everlasting. *Amen.*

Song of Assurance: (#10 Binder)

Great is Your Faithfulness

Scripture Reading:

Luke 15:11-32

Message:

“Reading Scripture, Reading Life, through Lenses Different from our Own”

~ Rev. Dr. Karl Kuhn

Pastoral Prayer and Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. *Amen.*

Offering

Offering, tithes and gifts can be made before or after worship in the offering baskets/plates at the welcome area of the church. St. James is also set up to take on-line offerings through the website (stmstjucc.org).

Offertory Music:

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

~ *The offering is brought to the altar* ~

Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving: (all together)

You who created the heavens and earth,
the snails and gazelle,
the dandelion and rose,
inchworms and kittens and heirloom tomatoes and
kites and ocean waves and the all the hues of the color blue,
we are grateful.

Grateful that we have any sense of your mysterious presence,
grateful that you give us life,
and ask simply that we live abundantly and fully into your calling,
to be your love in this world.

We give to you today, what is rightfully yours to begin with. Bless our offerings, gifts, time and talents not to our glory, Lord; but, to the care and love of those who are in need. *Amen.*

A Sending Forth Song: (#25 Binder)

Open My Eyes That I May See

Benediction:

Go now and continue to offer prayers and thanksgiving for all whom you meet. Be welcomed back into the arms of God and likewise, welcome others back with warm embrace. Do not be led astray; but weep for those who suffer and share faith and truth with all.

May the Holy Spirit lead you into all godliness and dignity as you go in peace to love and serve the Lord. *Amen.*

Postlude

The Prodigal Son

Luke 15:11-32 ESV

And he said, “There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

“But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”’ And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.

“Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father

has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'

Website: www.stmstjucc.org email: stmstjoffice@gmail.com

phone: 920.693.8361

Send an email to be added to our prayer team.

Messages are uploaded to YouTube: St. Mark's & St. James UCC

LOOKING FORWARD TO:

- **VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL!** This week Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday, August 17-19th, 9am to noon at St. Mark's!
- **Sunday, August 22nd** - Worship at St. James, 9:00am
Worship at St. Mark's, 10:30am

THIS WEEK'S CELEBRATIONS:

BIRTHDAYS:

August 17th - Heather Henschel

18th - Julie Herrmann

ANNIVERSARIES:

August 17th - Galen & Deb LaDuke

18th - Jeffrey & Amy Bodoh

20th - Glenn & Terri Grunwald

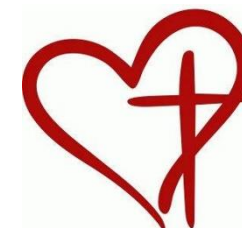
21st - Mike & Janice Marcheske



Rev. Dr. Karl Kuhn is Professor of Religion, Grace Chair of Religious Studies, and Dean of Humanities and Fine Arts at Lakeland University where he has served since the Fall of 1999. He graduated from UW-Milwaukee with a B.A. in English in 1990, and later earned an M. Div. from Eden Theological Seminary in 1994, followed by a Ph.D. in Biblical Studies from Marquette University in 1999. An ordained United Church of Christ clergy, he has served several congregations as an associate and interim minister.

His special interests are in the fields of biblical interpretation and biblical theology, and he has widely published and lectured in both fields. He has authored numerous articles and six books, *Having Words with God: The Bible as Conversation* (Fortress Press, 2008), *The Heart of Biblical Narrative: Rediscovering Biblical Appeal to the Emotions* (Fortress Press, 2009), *Luke: The Elite Evangelist* (Paul's Social Network Series; Collegeville, Liturgical, 2010), and *The Kingdom According to Luke and Acts* (Baker Academic, 2015), *Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Fortress Press, 2018), and co-authored *New Proclamation: The Essential Pastoral Companion for Preaching, Year C 2010* (Fortress Press, 2009). His latest work is entitled *Reading the Bible Badly: How American Christians Misunderstand and Misread their Scriptures* (Cascade Press, 2020).

Rev. Dr. Karl Kuhn is also currently serving as an Associate Editor for the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, one of the leading journals in his field. In addition to his work in biblical studies, Karl also speaks frequently in the community to promote interfaith understanding.



GPS

Grow – deeper in our faith and relationship with God.
Pray – pray daily for family, neighbors, and others.
Study – read the Bible, pray over what we read, ask questions.

Additional Text:

All of Luke 15 Deuteronomy 21:18-21 Matt. 22:11-14

The Parable of the Prodigal Son is an open parable, meaning, there are several characters and storylines. We are called to reflect on their responses while asking the question, “What would I do if...?”

What would you do if you were the begrudging brother? Would you welcome your sinful younger brother back into the fold and celebrate?

What if you were the father? Filled with compassion; wanting only to have his boy back home; anxiously scanning the horizon early every morning?

How about the younger son? He seeks independence, his own way in the world. Then he finds out just how harsh the world can be – especially when he keeps making bone-headed mistakes and bad choices!

So, who is this text really about? The Son? The Dad? The Brother? It’s about all of them and it is, of course, about God. It’s about God’s attitude and activity toward sinners and the way others respond to them; and how God calls us to respond in a Christly fashion.

At the beginning of this chapter, you will find the Pharisees and teachers of the law, evil-eyeing Jesus and condemning him because he welcomes tax collectors and “sinners” to his table. Under their glaring eyes all are to be blamed!

At the heart of the Pharisees message: blame, sin, punishment, condemnation. At the heart of Jesus’ message: redemption, salvation, forgiveness and grace. Which message do you want to hear?

Prayer: Lord forgive us when we follow the message of the Pharisees and not Jesus. May your grace be sufficient unto us. *Amen.*

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