



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, January 15, 2012

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

Prelude *Andante for Organ*.....W. A. Mozart

Call to Worship and the Organ Meditation

DoxologyNo. 592

Responsive Reading

*I will bless the Lord at all times.
God's praise shall continually be in my mouth.
My soul makes its boast in the Lord;
Let the humble hear and be glad.
O magnify the Lord with me.
And let us exalt God's name together!*

Hymn "Holy, Holy Holy! Lord God Almighty"No. 138

Anthem *Blessed Be God*.....Betty Jacobson

Prayer of Affirmation

Eternal God, you are present to us through all the times of our lives; when the sun shines brightly and all is well; and when the clouds gather darkly and our lives are disrupted. We confess, dear Lord, that in difficult times it can be hard for us to trust in your goodness. Yet even so, we call on you in prayer, give to you our fears and our questions, and hope to experience your tender care. For the faith to do this, we give thanks. Amen.

First Scripture Lesson Psalm 139: 1-18

Sermonette for Youth

Sacrament of Baptism

Hymn "Alleluia, Alleluia! Give Thanks"No. 106

Pastoral Prayer and The Lord's Prayer

Offertory *Jig Fugue*.....D. Buxtehude

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.

Solo *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*.....J. S. Bach
Elisa Sutherland, Soloist

Second Scripture Lesson Philippians 3: 12-16

Sermon "Resolutions...WILLPOWER!"Dr. Andrew Chaney

Hymn "Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart!"No. 145

Benediction

Postlude *In God is Joy*.....J. S. Bach

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

John Bryant
Organist

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

USHERS

8:00 am
Phillis Dunbar

GREETERS

Jennifer and
Kevin Gazley

Liz and
David Chandler

USHERS

9:00 am
Hyde Perce
Jennifer Burch
Bev Kirk
Bonnie McColl
Mike McGill
Jim McColl
Jimmy Tierney
Nancy Tierney

USHERS

10:30 am
Duff Peterson
Diane Cook
Doug Cook
Craig Hallsteen
Ed King
Carl Mueller
LaDona O'Donnell

BUS ATTENDANT

Howard Schneider

ALTAR GUILD

Bob Cannon
Bob Emerson

A Stephen Ministry Congregation

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ALTAR FLOWERS: The altar flowers are given in loving memory of Martha Park and Robert Schuldt by their family. The lavabo flowers are given in loving memory of Larry Lawson, Bruce Lawson and Ellin Hales by their families.

MILESTONES: We welcome to baptism today at the 9:00 service Vivian Elizabeth Florig, daughter of Katherine (Diener) and Andrew Edwin Florig, granddaughter of John and Marty Diener; and at the 10:30 service Sydney Greer Blair, daughter of Jackie (Schultz) and Charles G. Blair.

We extend the sympathy of the congregation to the family of Rachel B. Morris upon her death on December 26. The white rose on the altar today celebrates her life.

KUC'S NEW WEBSITE! Check out our new website at www.kuc.org! It is colorful, informative, and easy-to-navigate!

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES: Jesus as a Child (Lambs-4th) We want the children to know that Jesus was a real boy who lived in a devout Jewish family. *And Jesus increased in wisdom and*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(CONTINUED)

in years, and in divine and human favor.
(Luke 2: 52)

Bible Habitat (5th & 6th) We will begin planning and designing the Bible Habitat.

FIRST WEDNESDAYS: Join us at noon on February 1 for lunch and a program about the history of "Amazing Grace." Our presenter will be Todd Parkhurst. Please RSVP to the church no later than January 30, 251-4272.

RUMMAGE DROP-OFF FOR FRENCH ROOM ONLY, TODAY: We are accepting items for the French Room in the library. Please contact Jennifer Burch with questions, jenburch@comcast.net.

KUC WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY: We have started a new 9-week session on Wednesdays from 1-3 pm and Monday evenings from 7-9 pm. Come listen, study, share, and grow in fellowship as we explore the study of David together. Please email Traci Groff with any questions, tracigroff@comcast.net.

KIDS4KIDS CLUB NIGHT: Club Night is for 1st-6th graders, Tuesday, January 17, 4:15-6:00 pm. We will focus on service, fellowship, and fun! Please RSVP to Laurel Lien, llien@kuc.org. The cost is \$15. Dinner is included.

"LOVE IN THE TIME OF BLACKBERRY", January 18, 7 to 9 pm at KUC: Come to this Alison Tobey Smart Memorial Fund presentation by Dr. Cheryl Rampage, Senior Vice President for Programs and Academic Affairs at the Family Institute of Northwestern University. Bring a friend!

BRIDGE: Intermediate bridge players: Our next date for bridge is January 24, 1-4 pm. We're playing four-hand bridge, Chicago scoring, assuming knowledge of beginner conventions. Please contact Eva Sorock to sign up, e.sorock@gmail.com.

SAVE THE DATES:

WINTER WARM-UP SUPPER, Sunday, January 22, 5 pm is our annual Winter Warm-up Soup Supper. This is a fundraiser for the high school mission trip to New Orleans. Tickets can be purchased at the church office or online through the link on www.

kuc.org. For more information, please contact silvi@kuc.org.

KUC WRITER'S EXCHANGE: This is an opportunity to share ideas about the steps in writing and editing, and the challenges and successes you might have had with your own projects. Friends who are not KUC members are welcome to attend. Please RSVP to Sallie Smith to be a part of the KUC Writers Exchange on Tuesday, January 24 in the Culbertson Room, 9-10:30 am.

ZEST FOR LIFE COOKING SCHOOL: The next adult class is on Feb. 4, 6-9 pm. This will be a hands-on class to learn to make party appetizers. Contact Jenburch@comcast.net for details and to register.

SUNDAY SCHOOL PARENT SOCIAL, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2012, "Tables for Eight" potluck style dinners for Sunday School parents. Please contact Laura McColl for more information, m.mccoll@sbcglobal.net.

JR. & SR. HIGH SKI AND SNOWBOARD TRIP! 2012 is the 5th anniversary of Deep Freeze! Come join the fun, Feb.17-19. Registrations are due Feb. 1. Email silvi@kuc.org or visit www.kuc.org for a link to registration.

KUC TALENT AND ART SHOW: The Greatest Talent and Art Show on Earth will be at the Kenilworth Club on Sunday afternoon, February 26. To sign up to perform your talent or tell a joke, show your art work or be part of the committee, contact Sallie Smith at slsy2k@yahoo.com.

Preaching Schedule

Jan. 22-Dr. Chaney
Jan. 29-Dr. Gil Bowen
Feb. 5-Gospel Sunday
Feb. 12-Dr. Chaney
Feb. 19-Dr. Chaney
Feb. 26-Dr. Chaney

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

The Care Guild Leader for January is Lyn Little. 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 D. Chaney “Check Your Priorities” **Matthew 21: 33-36**

“Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.’ And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.”

Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures?” “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.’ Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.” When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.”

This parable is full of drama and tension. The whole scene is quite vivid as it begins with landscape details of the farmstead with a precise picture-like quality. A clash arises between some thoughtless tenant farmers and some innocent servants of a property owner. Before we know it, the conflict has ended with the wicked death of the owner’s son. It is perplexing how the landowner continues to trust the tenants, and how the tenants believe they can become heirs through murder. We have insight into the inner workings of the landowner’s mind: “They will respect my son,” as well as the internal, unreasonable plotting of the tenants: “This is the heir, let us kill him and get his inheritance.” The message is stark: when humanity forgets who really owns the world, terrible things happen, even violence.

Ownership is the subject of this parable. Obviously, God is the owner of the vineyard. The parable illustrating the human tendency to behave less like guests in God’s creation and more like management comes alive in this parable. From start to finish, we see confusion and conflict resulting from human beings who mistake what belongs to someone else for their own possession. This confusion over ownership constitutes the theological heartbeat of the parable. We see the ownership of God in the beginning six verbs of the parable: “planted,” “put,” “dug,” “built,” “leased,” “went.” He not only goes to great lengths to care for his vineyard, but trusts the tenants to be responsible in his absence. When Matthew informs us that the owner “went away,” these

tenants attempt to steal or divert what has only been entrusted to them, not given to them. They rewrite the lease contract in their head to read with the kind of autonomy we’re prone to read into our modern circumstance: “It’s my life to live. I make my own decisions. I’ll choose the obligations I wish.” These tenant farmers may behave as if they own the farm and work for themselves. But the truth of the matter is that they’re accountable to the owner. Trying to rewrite the terms of those privileges, or escape the responsibilities that accompany them, may engender a momentary feeling of freedom. But God remains the sovereign owner of everything we are and have, regardless of how we act. And not even coercion and cruelty can wrest from God what belongs to God and somehow make it our own, or allow us to rewrite the rules of life so that they conform to our own image.

So when the tenant farmers contemplate obtaining the inheritance of the owner, they’re playing with the idea of owning what is not theirs to own. Since an inheritance is not something one gets for oneself or coerces for oneself, the very notion of inheriting the vineyard is a futile exercise. By its very nature, an inheritance is a gift that one cannot earn or arrange. The vinedressers in our story stand out for their confusion over ownership and loan, they even kill this son in the weird belief that they would come into possession of the soil. The fact that the owner sent the son is shocking. Yet when talking about the astonishing mercy of God, however, it all begins to make sense. The great lengths to which

God goes for us should elicit loyalty, not disgust. God's incomprehensibly steadfast character and undying love ought to provoke gratitude. It should make us re-arrange our priorities so that we honor God's ownership over life.

We have all heard ways to prioritize life. Many times people make a list where priorities are ordered numerically from the highest to the lowest. Others have said that life should be looked at in the shape of a pie, in which priorities must be held in balance depending on pressing circumstances. What would be ideal would be to bring God over and above all priorities as if God were truly the owner of our lives.

Sometimes the issue is not simply getting priorities in the right order; it's fitting them together and finding room for them all. Many times people say that their greatest challenge is balancing work and family, or work and personal time. That challenge never ends—even for a family specialist like James Dobson, who said, "I must admit that the problem of balancing career, church, and family is a constant struggle," he says. "It is rarely possible to realign priorities once and for all. An imbalance can occur in a matter of days. The moment I relax and congratulate myself for having practiced what I preach, I tend to say yes a few times when I should have said no—and suddenly I'm overworked again."

Seeing God as the owner of life rather than fitting in against competing demands may be a way to check our priorities. If we see the demand's amount of weight placed on either side of God-measured priorities, we might determine better where we're needed most. Maybe having a spiritual understanding of that would help us arrange our priorities more in tune with how God would have us live. Why don't we include God more in our prioritizing of life? The parable illustrates that we may not recognize God's ownership of life, and we may not feel that God really cares about how we are living.

Remember when President John F. Kennedy's vision challenged Congress: "I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the Earth." Part of the reason why Apollo 11 landed on the moon 8 years later was because everyone at NASA believed in his vision. There is even a legend about President Kennedy stopping a janitor in the hallway at NASA and asking him what he was doing. "Mr. President, I am working on putting a man on the moon." There are two

points that relate to our parable, first, that the President would even talk to a janitor and be interested in what he was doing. Yes, God the owner of the vineyard, does ask what we are doing and is interested in our lives. Secondly, that the janitor embraced the vision of President Kennedy and lived knowing that what he was doing was a part of that larger vision. Yes, God sees our lives as being a part of God's work in the world. We may not feel that God values us or trusts us that much, but we have a role to play in what God is doing.

Let us consider how God really is the owner of all creation, all of the cosmos. An article recalled that on March 5, 1979, nine U. S. satellites simultaneously radioed back to earth that a gamma radiation explosion occurred in a nearby galaxy known as N-49. This explosion lasted for only one-tenth of a second, but released more radiation than our sun does in 3,000 years. Doyle Evans, an astrophysicist at the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratories in New Mexico, noted that had this explosion of energy occurred in our galaxy, it would have instantly vaporized the earth. At the end of that article, the writer stated that yes, God "has the whole world in his hands."

God is the owner of the big picture and also of the little things in life. When Jesus said, "Consider the lilies of the field and how they are clothed" he contrasted their natural beauty with the splendor of King Solomon's robes. King Solomon had amassed great wealth and military might, yet he had built his kingdom on forced labor, exploitation, and oppressive rule. Solomon's book of Ecclesiastes, written in this time of unprecedented prosperity, may be considered one of the most pessimistic books of the Bible. What a lesson for us—on the North Shore there is no shortage of affluence, yet we need to be careful that our perfectionist tendencies and attempts to over-manipulate circumstances do not crowd God out of our priorities. Compartmentalizing God as Solomon did, opens the way for unethical behavior to enter parts of our lives.

God's absence can lead to unreasonable behavior, as the tenants thought that killing the heir would mean they would inherit the land. There was a recipe book that needed to be recalled because it contained a recipe that would blow up as it was being made. Life may look like that, good on paper, but when one ingredient is missing, it makes all the difference in the world. When God is obviously missing from a part of life, that part may blow up in our face.

Checking our priorities means

letting God's light shine over our lives,
all of our lives, every part, the big and
the small, realizing that we have been
entrusted with responsibility by God
who loves us and believes that we can
love God, our neighbor, and "the vine-
yard of life" as God intends. Amen.

Kenilworth Union Church
211 Kenilworth Avenue
Kenilworth, IL 60043-0308
ADDRESS SERVICE
REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT No. 130
GLENVIEW, IL
60025