



The Kenilworth Union Church

211 Kenilworth Avenue Kenilworth, Illinois 60043 (847)-251-4272
www.kuc.org

Dr. Andrew Chaney
Senior Minister

Dr. Gilbert W. Bowen
Minister Emeritus

Sarah E. Garcia
Associate Minister

Lisa R. Bond
Director of Music

Anne S. Faurot
Director of Children's Ministries

The Service of Worship

Sunday, January 29, 2012

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

Prelude "Foundation" Fugue in C.....J. S. Bach

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 "God of Our Life"No. 275

Anthem *Fairest Lord Jesus*.....From Schlesische Volkslieder,
.....Arr. C. Schalk
Rejoice Singers and Congregation (see insert)

Prayer of Affirmation

God of our lives, each new day and this day, we bring ourselves to you for forgiveness, clarity and renewal. Be our guide, we pray, when we are perplexed, our strength when we are weary, and our companion when we are lonely and are in need of your assurance. Help us to love you above all things, that we may love one another and ourselves as your beloved children.

First Scripture Lesson Luke 12: 22-32

Sermonette for Youth

Sacrament of Baptism 10:30 am

Hymn "Great Is Thy Faithfulness"No. 276
(verses 1 & 2)

Pastoral Prayer and The Lord's Prayer

Offertory *Christ Hath a Garden*.....Gerald Near
Chancel Choir

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 "If with all your hearts" from *Elijah*.....Mendelssohn
Jeremy Fisher, Soloist

Second Scripture Lesson Philippians 4: 4-9

Sermon "Out of Anxiety into Life"Dr. Gilbert W. Bowen

Hymn "How Firm a Foundation"No. 361
(verses 1, 2, & 5)

Benediction

Postlude "Trumpet Tune in D"David N. Johnson

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

John Bryant
Organist

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

<u>USHERS</u> 8:00 am Phillis Dunbar	<u>USHERS</u> 9:00 am Carol Berry John A. Dienner III Margaret Ann Fowler Shawn Hunt Denise Hillinger Bob Underwood Bob Zabel	<u>USHERS</u> 10:30 am Mark F. Toledo Mike Harper Charlotte Meyer David Sterrett Allen Weaver Justin Keith Andrew Stone	<u>BUS ATTENDANT</u> Hyde Perce
<u>GREETERS</u> Jan and George Wishart Mei and Doug Aden			<u>ALTAR GUILD</u> Bob Cannon Bob Emerson

A Stephen Ministry Congregation

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ALTAR FLOWERS: The flowers on the altar are given in loving memory of Lisa Louise Mowry.

MILESTONES: We welcome to baptism today at the 10:30 service Cecily Wadley Stone, daughter of John Andrew Proctor Stone and Robin (Reid) Stone and later today, their children, Harry Clayton Stone and John Cleve-

land Proctor Stone.

We extend the sympathy of the congregation to the family of Tenya Losching DePaepe, upon the death of her father, Bernard Losching on December 31. The white rose on the altar today celebrates his life.

FIRST WEDNESDAYS: Join us at noon on February 1 for lunch and a

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(CONTINUED)

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.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES: Jesus Teaches Prayer (Lambs -4th) *Lord, teach us to pray.* (Luke 11: 1) Jesus was in the habit of going off by himself to pray. His disciples wanted to know how to pray as well. Jesus teaches us that God already knows what our hearts desire. Although it may not be in our timeframe, a life of prayer does bring answers.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAM, Tuesday, January 31, 7:30-9:00 pm. Join us for a presentation, "Transforming K-12 Education: What Will It Take?" Our presenter is Ralph Martire who will discuss the quality of our public education system.

ZEST FOR LIFE COOKING SCHOOL: The next adult cooking class is on party appetizers which will be on Saturday, February 4, 6-9 pm. This is a hands-on class and all proceeds support KUC outreach agencies. Contact jenburch@comcast.net. for details and to register.

GOSPEL SUNDAY IS FEBRUARY 5 at the 9:00 and 10:30 services. Vernon Clark and the Heirs of Joy will sing along with the Chancel Choir and KUC Youth Choir. Gospel music will be a part of the preludes, so please arrive early.

CALLING ALL WOMEN: Join us for an evening of fellowship and networking with other KUC women on Wednesday, February 8, 7-9 pm at Little Ricky's in Winnetka. The group's direction will develop as we go but will offer a great opportunity to congregate for those of us that are unable to participate in KUC events during the workday. Feel free to bring friends. Please contact Jiffy Willson at jennwillson@ifmnet.com for more information.

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.

LIVING WINDOWS AT KUC: On February 12, during the 9 and 10:30 am Sunday services, Kenilworth Union Church's stained glass windows come alive when member volunteers give brief readings portraying historic figures drawn from the images that surround the sanctuary. Nine of the windows are tributes to different Christian faiths, celebrating KUC's nondenominational heritage. The performance is in honor of KUC's 120th anniversary. For more information about the historic leaders, visit this link: <http://dl.dropbox.com/u/31632532/LivWindows%20InsertB.pdf>.

ASH WEDNESDAY IS FEBRUARY 22. Join us for a worship service at 7:00 pm in the Schmidt Chapel.

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.

THE GREATEST TALENT & ART SHOW ON EARTH, Sunday afternoon, Feb. 26, The Kenilworth Club. To sign up to perform your talent or tell a joke, show your art work or be part of the committee, contact Sallie Smith, sly2k@yahoo.com.

CONFIRMATION SUNDAY IS MARCH 11: Join us for an inspiring event at 10:30 am when we formally welcome our confirmands into the KUC church family.

<p>Preaching Schedule Feb. 5-8:00 am-Dr. Chaney 9 & 10:30 am-Gospel Sunday Feb. 12-Dr. Chaney Feb. 19-Dr. Chaney Feb. 26-Dr. Chaney Mar. 4-Dr. Chaney Mar. 11-Dr. Chaney</p>

<p>Please turn off all electronic devices while attending services. Thank you.</p>
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The Care Guild Leaders for January and February are Lyn Little and Sally Schneiders, respectively. 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 "The Art of Possibility"

One Christmas when our children were young, John and I took them to the Adler Planetarium to see the show called, *Mystery of the Christmas Star*. As the auditorium went black, we tilted back in the tall chairs and traveled back in time getting a scientific explanation of the celestial event that prompted the Magi to travel to Bethlehem. As we sat there in the darkness I imagined what it would have been like for the magi to travel the 800 or so miles on their journey between their homeland and Jerusalem. Leaving from somewhere in Babylon or Persia, they rode for 20-40 miles a day accompanied by a caravan of servants and animals that supported their trip, and as they followed the star. Sitting atop camels, with their rolling gait and padded, soft footsteps, the Magi would have had time to wonder and reflect on the wisdom of their journey and the possibility of what they might find at their destination.

Why did the Magi decide to make this lengthy voyage? "Why did they pack up and start on a journey not knowing how or where it would end, with only the light of a star to lead them? Was it because they were bored with the status quo, impatient with the way things were in the world?" asks John Buchanan. We don't know. But we do know that day after day they were drawn on farther and farther from home by the light from the star and the possibilities it suggested.

These magi- maybe there were 3 or 13, the Bible doesn't say - were the astrologers of their day. But they were also astronomers as well, since in that pre-scientific era there was no division between the two jobs. They were interested in all verifiable knowledge. They wouldn't have had sufficient understanding of the universe to realize fully the links between one event and another. Therefore they saw nothing wrong in bringing together, science, poetry, art and religion to explain and to understand the universe and what was happening in it. To them, observing nature - including charting the stars, noting the movements of other objects and making predictions based on the chart, were all one and the same. Considered the wise men of their day they studied the stars, and when they saw something new in the heavens, they tracked it down to see what it meant. They believed that important events were always announced by

the stars.

The Magi were acting on their belief that the star was a sign from God when they decided to make their trek. The unusual bright light from a star in the east would have suggested the possibility that a new king had been born there, and so they followed the star on their long and arduous journey to Jerusalem, the seat of kings. Only a great king would merit a star and so they took with them expensive royal gifts fit for a king.

Stars and light in biblical stories were always signs of God breaking in somewhere. A star with its light would have been seen as a sign, a wonder, a revelation, a guidepost, a traffic light, a kind of GPS device that could guide them and bring them to the point of divine revelation. "Rise, shine, your light has come," the prophet Isaiah wrote to the Israelites in their captivity in Babylon. For over 50 years they had been prisoners in a foreign country, and they longed to go home but couldn't even imagine the possibility of a different future. Now, however, the prophet tells them that a new future awaits them and God's light will lead them there.

"The call of the prophet in this passage is spoken to encourage a dispirited people to see God's transformative light coming just over the horizon and to imagine that when that light breaks over [Jerusalem], the city will be radiant, filled with the glory of God," writes Emily Askew. The prophet encourages them to stand and face a different future. "Hope for the future," Askew continues, "not only comes through the final appearance of the divine light but begins with the prophet's encouraging vision. He invites weary people to stand in the imagined future - helps people reorient themselves toward a better future, a time when light will begin to appear over the horizon once more."

That is the message of Epiphany. Peter Gomes, the brilliant and articulate former chaplain at Harvard University who died last year, preached these words on Epiphany Sunday some years ago. "It is very difficult to tear ourselves away from Bethlehem," he wrote. "There is a time to lay down one's cares and duties and run to Bethlehem and the manger, a time to follow

the star . . . a time to flee for refuge from the troubles of the world. There is also a time to return, to begin where we left off . . . for we have come [in the birth of Jesus] from an encounter with the world of the possible in the midst of the impossible. We have seen God and survived to tell the tale, moving about not knowing that our faces shine with the encounter, bearing the mark of the encounter forever and marveling in the darkest night of the soul at that wondrous star-filled night."

Our openness to possibility is more often the result of the basic framework of assumptions we carry around with us rather than the assumptions we find in the biblical story. "Every problem, every dilemma, every dead end we find ourselves facing in life, only appears unsolvable inside a particular frame or point of view," authors Roz and Benjamin Zander write in their book, *The Art of Possibility*. Become aware of those assumptions, create another frame for your story and the problems will vanish. Hidden from our awareness in the world of measurement- winning and losing, gaining acceptance, threatened rejection, raised hopes and the dash into despair, is the single assumption that life is about staying alive and making it through and surviving in a world of scarcity and peril. It feels safer to deal with reality as though it were fixed, as though people, ideas and situations can be fully known and measured." Life in the world of measurement is dominated by fear and greed.

Herod, Matthew tells us, was a frightened man. He was ambitious, cruel and paranoid. He eliminated anyone whom he saw as a threat to his power, including his own children and the rabbis who opposed him. Not a stable man, to say the least, Augustus said of him: "It is better to be Herod's dog than one of his children." His life was confined to a story line dominated by fear and greed, and when the Wise Men appeared in Jerusalem with news of a new king, Herod's anxiety kicked into high gear. Closed off to new ideas and possibilities he went on the defensive. He told the Magi, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me a word so that I may also go and pay him homage" when his real intention was to eliminate the child, not worship him. He showed his true colors when, assuming he had been tricked by the Wise Men who went home by another way, he had all the children, two and under, murdered in order to protect his power and authority.

The Wise Men, unlike Herod, lived in a world of possibility. That world, write the Zanders, "stretches beyond the world of measurement to include all worlds: infinite, generative and abundant. Unimpeded on a daily basis by the concern for survival, free from the generalized assumption of scarcity, a person stands in the great space of possibility in a posture of openness, with an unfettered imagination for what can be." According to Askew, "[This] kind of imagination is marked by the courage, the faith and the wisdom to imagine and call forward the world God desires us to make - a world in which the light of God radiates through us as individuals." Open to a new future, the Wise Men set out on a journey of hundreds of miles into the unknown, looking for what God might show them. They were open and willing to believe that a king could be born in a humble manger in the backwater town of Bethlehem. They were open to the possibility that their dream was a message from God. They were open to the possibility of going home by another way.

The prophet Isaiah, like the Wise Men, lived in the stream of possibility. He could see up ahead a new life, a new Temple, a restored Jerusalem. He could see the Israelites, no longer captive to a foreign power, free to create a society of peace and justice. He predicted that other nations would come to their light and kings to the brightness of their dawn. "Then you shall see and be radiant, your heart shall thrill and rejoice," Isaiah promised. (Isaiah 60: 5a) For the prophet, God's glory is made complete by the glory experienced and reflected by God's people. "Their radiance is essential to any bright future of God's own imagining. If they hope to sit on the sidelines while someone else shines instead of them, then they have missed the central role in God's vision," writes Barbara Brown Taylor.

An old story makes the point. The old abbot of a dying order of monks went to visit the local rabbi to see if the rabbi could offer him any advice that might save the monastery. They commiserated with one another about how the spirit had seemed to go out of their people. "Almost no one comes to the synagogue anymore," confessed the rabbi. "No one comes to the monastery," said the Abbott. When the Abbot got up to leave he said, "Have you no piece of advice that might save the monastery?" "No, I am sorry," the rabbi responded, "I have no advice to give you. The only thing I can tell you is that the Messiah is one of you."

When the other monks heard the Rabbi's words they wondered what possible significance they might have. Could it really be that the Messiah was one of them? As they contemplated who it might be, the old monks began to treat each other, and themselves, with more respect and care on the off chance that one of them might be the Messiah.

Because the forest in which the monastery was located was beautiful, people occasionally came to the forest to have a picnic or walk the ancient paths. They began to sense, as they never had before, an aura of respect that surrounded the monastery. They began to come more frequently, and some of the younger men began to engage in conversation with the monks. After a while one asked if he might join the order and then another and another until the monastery again became a thriving order - a vibrant authentic community of light and love.

The Abbot had a vision of the possible within the impossible when the light of the Rabbi's vision became the Abbot's new story. His point of view was transformed as he began to imagine a different future. The Wise Men were transformed by the light of a star into travelers seeking the salvation of the nations. The Israelites were transformed by God through Isaiah's message into believers in an unimaginable future as those who carried the light of God out into the world. So we too are called to a life of imagination, a life of renewing possibility. Barbara Brown Taylor challenges us to realize that "Jesus came to bring God's light into the world, not keep it for himself. He came to set other people on fire, not to burn like a torch all on his own." Jesus came to transform those of us who love the status quo, who are risk averse, who fear doing things differently than we have ever done them before, into dreamers of a generative and creative future filled with light and hope.

And so I leave you to follow my own star into an unknown future. But I wouldn't be going if I didn't believe that there are numerous possibilities out there where God can set me on fire so that I can bring God's light into the world. And I leave you to follow your own star into the unknown future as well. May you burn like a torch and set the world on fire with God's love as you face an exciting future filled with all kinds of possibilities. Amen.

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