

Kent United Church of Christ

AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING, ACCESSIBLE TO ALL, and W.I.S.E. CONGREGATION

MENTAL HEALTH SUNDAY

May 15, 2022

PRELUDE

Like a River Glorious

James Mountain,
arr. Marilynn Ham

GREETING

Please sign the attendance pads at the end of your pews.

Jackie Peck

*OPENING HYMN (Insert)

Come and Find the Quiet Center

BEACH SPRING

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Patrick Mason

May all people see the love, care, and compassion that is God.

God is our counselor and therapist. They help us heal and walk life with our siblings or ourselves living with mental health challenges.

Hear, O God, our prayers of hope, reconciliation, and wellness that we may feel your presence on our journey.

God loves us through all our blemishes, and we respond by grabbing onto hope.

God is a Holy Counselor and Journey Partner that holds us up with a beacon of Their immense love today, tomorrow, and always.

*INVOCATION

Patrick Mason

CALL TO CONFESSON

Patrick Mason

Sacred Silence

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Pastor Amy

*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

May the grace and peace of the Risen Christ be with you.

And also with you.

LIVING OUT OUR MISSION

Nominating Ministry
Hospitality & Membership Committee

CHILDREN'S SNAP CHAT

"Jesus Loves the Little Children" is sung to bless our children as they depart



A POETRY READING

*"How Quiet Are the Prayers"
"And in the Stars"*

Mary Homer

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

John 13:31-35

Teresa Lay

Here ends the reading from God's Word.

Thanks be to God, who is still speaking.

SERMON

Love Has No Stigma

Pastor Amy

ANTHEM

Meet Me Here
Max Swartout, soloist
Chancel Choir

Craig Hella-Johnson

A LITANY OF LIFE EXPERIENCES

Linda Morris

When we feel nervous, and the walls close in, and too many people are too close, and every day noises are too loud, and every light is too bright, and all we can do is plan our panicked escape from the situation we are in...

God help us

When sadness and depression pull us down like a lead weight, making it hard to move, hard to concentrate, hard to find motivation, hard to be alive, just hard...

God help us

When we can't help but burst into tears, and we learn the difference between crying and weeping, and the weeping won't stop, and we lose hope that we will ever feel hopeful again...

God help us

When information comes at us in blasts that we can't make sense of, and it seems like someone keeps randomly "changing the channel" when we try to focus, and it feels impossible to learn or keep up with what's going on around us...

God help us

When we get so revved that we want to take on the world, and leap tall buildings, and outrun freight trains and take on too many major projects at once, and stay up all night for days on end, and the only thing we know we can't do is slow ourselves down, until we crash out of control...

God help us

When voices inside our minds constantly intrude upon our lives, and when they won't stop and they confuse our thoughts and make it impossible to be with other people, let alone have any kind of real conversation...

God help us

When all we can see is a world that is out to get us, and we get stuck believing that some grand conspiracy is designed to hurt us, or ruin us, or kill us, and we believe that only our constant vigilance can save us, if anything can...

God help us

When we simply don't know how out of touch other people think our thoughts are...

God help us

When we feel completely isolated and alone, longing for social connections we cannot make...

God help us

When we feel utter despair, and we see more reasons to end our lives than to keep living...

God help us

When we strive with best intentions to stop addictions that are ruining our lives, and we try our best again and again, but we can't resist, and we end up over and over again at the same helpless place that we would give

anything to avoid...

God help us

When our thoughts jumble and things we thought we knew slip away, and we feel helpless, powerless, and scared, for the moment and for the future...

God help us.

LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Healer
who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kin-dom 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 kin-dom,
and the power and the glory forever, Amen.**

HYMN OF

COMMITMENT (Insert)

Lord of All Hopefulness

SLANE

A W.I.S.E. LITANY (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, Engaged)

Al Barber

On our own, we forget that we are a bundle of bones, animated by the breath of God.

On our own, we forget that human ways lead to a dry and dusty valley.

When we remember God's promise of life and love, we can become more than we are.

When we remember the igniting power of the Holy Spirit, we become alive again to follow God's Holy Ways.

Seeking to live in God's ways means leaving fear behind and living in welcome.

Seeking to embody Love means including all our neighbors, especially those who are made vulnerable by mental illness.

As the Spirit sets us on fire once again, we yearn to strengthen the Body of Christ by reaching out to those who experience the world as a place where chaos and confusion often reign.

As the Spirit opens our hearts, we strive to be a community of love and support for those who live with mental health challenges.

We hear the groan of Creation. We feel it in our own lives. We hide our fears of inadequacy and our sense of brokenness deep within, forgetting that God is present in the depths as well as the heights.

As we groan with the whole of Creation, waiting for God's healing grace, we commit to sharing our whole selves with God and one another. We will engage each other, with friends, with family, and with our neighbors, leaving no one out, especially those who have been stigmatized because of mental illness.

On this Mental Health Sunday, we celebrate the amazing power of the Spirit to humble us, unite us, and make us new.

Come, Holy Spirit, Come. Blow through our hearts and minds, through the fears and foolishness that separate us one from another, and reshape us into the Body needed here and now.

Come, Holy Spirit. Fill us with new life, free of fear, ignorance, and stigma that we may truly welcome, include, support, and engage all your children, particularly those who struggle with mental health challenges.

Come, Holy Spirit. Make us W.I.S.E. Amen.

INVITATION TO SHARE OUR GIFTS

Tracey Lohman & Grace Polcha

VOLUNTARY

Come Down, O Love Divine

R.V. Williams, arr. Helman

*DOXOLOGY

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Loralea Allen

*CLOSING HYMN #388

Help Us Accept Each Other

AURELIA

*BENEDICTION

Jeff Roeger

POSTLUDE

With Faith Transcending

Lani Smith



***Our service has ended. Now our service begins.
We are the Body of Christ, and the whole world awaits us.***

Members of our Mental Health Ministry/W.I.S.E. Team are: Loralea Allen, Al Barber, Sue Hetrick, Mary Homer, Tracey Lohman, Patrick Mason, Linda Morris, Jackie Peck, Grace Polcha, Jeff Roeger, and Barb Werstler.

*The chancel flowers today are an offering from Don and Nancy Bubenzer
in honor of their grandchildren Emma, Zane, Elijah, and Liam.
The sunflowers are a sign of our solidarity with the people of Ukraine.
May peace prevail.*

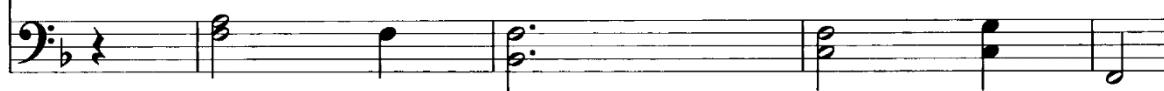
Unison



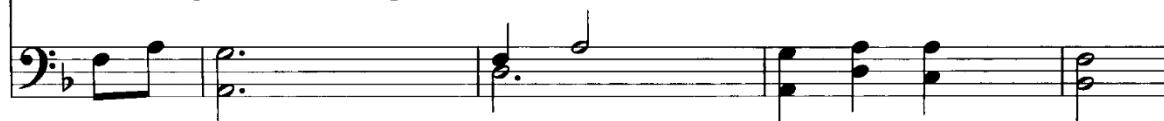
1 Come and find the quiet center in the crowded life we lead,
 2 Silence is a friend who claims us, cools the heat and slows the pace,
 3 In the Spirit let us travel, open to each other's pain,



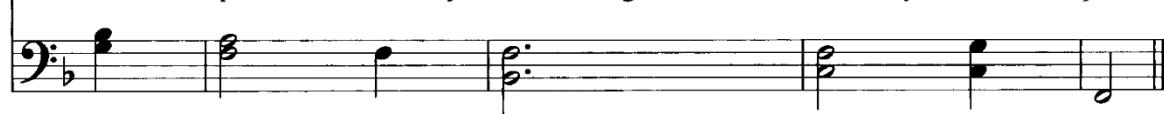
find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed:
 God it is who speaks and names us, knows our being, touches base,
 let our loves and fears unravel, celebrate the space we gain:



clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes, that we can see
 making space within our thinking, lifting shades to show the sun,
 there's a place for deepest dreaming, there's a time for heart to care,



all the things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be.
 raising courage when we're shrinking, finding scope for faith begun.
 in the Spirit's lively scheming, there is always room to spare!



WORDS: Shirley Erena Murray (1931-)

MUSIC: Attr. B. F. White (1880-1879), *The Sacred Harp*, 1844; arr. Jack Schrader (1942-)

Words and Music Arr. © 1992 Hope Publishing Company

BEACH SPRING

8.7.8.7.D.

Meet Me Here

Craig Hella-Johnson

Meet me here
Won't you meet me here
Where the old fence ends and the horizon begins
There's a balm in the silence
Like an understanding air
Where the old fence ends and the horizon begins

We've been walking through the darkness
On this long, hard climb
Carried ancestral sorrow
For too long a time
Will you lay down your burden
Lay it down, come with me It will never be forgotten
Held in love, so tenderly

Then we'll come to the mountain
We'll go bounding to see
That great circle of dancing
And we'll dance endlessly
And we'll dance with the all the children
Who've been lost along the way
We will welcome each other
Coming home, this glorious day
We are home in the mountain
And we'll gently understand
That we've been friends forever
That we've never been alone
We'll sing on through any darkness
And our Song will be our sight
We can learn to offer praise again
Coming home to the light...

LORD OF ALL HOPEFULNESS

SLANE



1. Lord of all hope-ful-ness, Lord of all joy, Whose
2. Lord of all ea - ger-ness, Lord of all faith, Whose
3. Lord of all kind - li - ness, Lord of all grace, Your
4. Lord of all gen - tle-ness, Lord of all calm, Whose



1. trust, ev - er child-like, no cares can de - stroy, Be
2. strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe, Be
3. hands swift to wel-come, your arms to em - brace, Be
4. voice is con - tent-ment, whose pres-ence is balm, Be



1. there at our wak - ing, and give us, we pray, Your
2. there at our la - bors, and give us, we pray, Your
3. there at our hom-ing, and give us, we pray, Your
4. there at our sleep-ing, and give us, we pray, Your



1. bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.
2. strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.
3. love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.
4. peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

Text: 10 11 11 12; 'Lord of all hopefulness', words by Jan Struther, 1901-1953; fr. Enlarged Songs of Praise, 1931.

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Music: Trad. Irish melody; adapt. fr. The Church Hymnary, 1927.

W.I.S.E. Covenant **Kent United Church of Christ**

Entering into a WISE (**W**elcoming~**I**nclusive~**S**upportive~**E**ngaged) covenant is a *holy and sacred promise* to God, to each other, and to our community. It is grounded in the perfect love we know God holds for each of us. We are God's beloved children, and through a WISE covenant we proclaim that we are beloved even when we are experiencing mental illness, addiction, or other brain dis-ease [Lund (2014), p. 93]. As our Sunday services regularly affirm, "We do not come as perfect people; but as people perfectly loved by God" (Senior Pastor Amy Gopp, 2021). This is the heart of the WISE covenant.

Specifically, as a member of this congregation, I commit to

- Recognize mental health is a part of all our lives; this is not an "us" vs. "them" reality. Further, I recognize the role of our congregation is not to "fix" situations but to make referrals and share resources when appropriate, and to be present with those experiencing challenges, responding with compassion. I am called to proclaim that we are loved by our Almighty and All-Vulnerable God and accepted for exactly who we are, no exceptions. I do not believe that our identity is rooted in any diagnosis, addiction, or mental health challenge but rather as the beloved children of God.
- Extend radical belonging to all and accept each other just as we are, honoring our lived experiences.
- Hold sacred and safe space and accompany one another and our families through experiences of the pain and despair of mental illness, addiction, and other dis-ease.
- Create a stigma-free, judgment-free, and shame-free environment; choose words that are life-giving and not stigmatizing labels and affirm our humanity instead of creating more boundaries between us.
- Educate myself and our wider community to better understand mental health and substance use disorders, neurodevelopment differences, and other brain dis-ease.
- Companion our children, youth, and elderly; listen without judgment to their stories of mental dis-ease, whether personal or within their families and among their friends; recognize particular needs in certain seasons of our lives.
- Recruit, nominate, and support persons in mental health and addiction recovery to serve on ministry teams and in leadership positions within the congregation.
- Being open to calling clergy and hiring staff engaged in recovery from mental health, addiction, or brain dis-ease challenges.

12.07.2021

I also commit to the mission of our congregation to

- Maintain appropriate contact and offer support to members who become incarcerated or hospitalized because of episodes of mental illness and behaviors due to addiction.
- Form strategic partnerships with mental health and addiction recovery agencies and professionals, the LGBTQAI+ community, racial justice organizations, and social service agencies to join with them in advocacy for justice in treatment and support.
- Invite and encourage support and recovery organizations to use our building facilities.
- Maintain clear and healthy boundaries for the well-being of the congregation and community.
- Hold ourselves true to this covenant by convening a team to review our WISE actions each January. This includes evaluating our areas of strength and identifying areas needing more resources in the coming year.
- Proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ for all who are a part of our community so that everyone knows they are loved and accepted by God just as they are, and provide the hope that Christ makes all things new.

We, the congregation of Kent United Church of Christ, pledge to uphold this covenant in our personal lives as well as in the actions of our church family, and to prayerfully seek God's guidance in building a Welcoming/Inclusive/Supportive/Engaged community.



5 simple things you can do

**to make the world a better place
for people with mental illnesses
and their families**

1 Be a friend

Provide companionship and compassion on the road toward recovery. Offer a ride to church or to a local support group. Listen without judgement. Pray for those you know with mental illnesses and for their family members.

2 Be an inspiration

Share your story. Has mental illness impacted you or your family in some way? Your story may empower others to seek treatment or have hope.

3 Watch your language

Pay attention to the words you use and avoid stigmatizing labels. Do not refer to people as "crazy," "psycho," "lunatic" or "mental."

4 Be a "StigmaBuster"

Challenge negative attitudes toward mental illness among your friends and acquaintances and in the media.

5 Learn the facts

Educate yourself about the various mental illnesses. Attend a lecture or class or use the Internet. Good places to start include the National Alliance on Mental Illness, www.nami.org, and the National Institute of Mental Health, www.nimh.nih.gov.

The United Church of Christ of Kent
cordially invites you to our
Celebration of Racial Justice

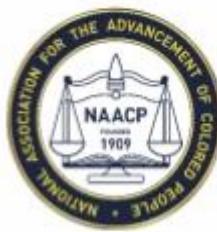
Sunday, May 22, 2022
1400 East Main Street in Kent

10am Worship

The Rev. Dr. Velda Love, UCC Minister for Racial Justice, guest preacher
Rev. Michael Howard, Faith in Action Minister, UCC Living Water Association



11am Dedication of the NAACP Portage County Office
at Kent United Church of Christ



11:30am Benefit Luncheon

*featuring BBQ pulled pork and chicken from Neil Dukes' Pit Stop Pub
All proceeds going to the King Kennedy Community Center*



RSVP to office@kentucc.org or (330) 673-9534 by May 18, 2022