

KIRKWOOD KRONICLE

A Christian Community Growing Together, Knowing, Loving, and Serving Christ,
to make Him known to all.

November 2020

A Message from our Pastor Chris Shearer



The Old Normal, The New Normal, and The Next Normal – Church During and After the Pandemic #1:

First, let's consider a crucial facet of the current public health catastrophe that gets lost all too often in the daily reporting of new Covid cases, and total Covid-related deaths. America is experiencing a mental health meltdown. Make no mistake, the political rage and racial tension that we're experiencing is rooted in this psychological unraveling, at least in part. Near the end of the summer, the CDC reported the results of an extensive study

on the mental health impact of the pandemic:

- 25.5% of those surveyed said they had experienced symptoms of anxiety disorder, while 24.3% said they had experienced symptoms of depression.
- Further, the researchers found that 10.7% of all respondents said they had considered suicide at some point during the 30 days leading up to the survey; unemployment brought about by the pandemic was the leading cause of the increase.
- 13.3% of adults have begun or increased substance abuse as a coping mechanism during the pandemic.



KirkWood Presbyterian Church

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Website: <http://www.kirkwoodpcusa.org/>

Worship: 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. in person or online

Sunday School: 9:30 a.m. - children ages 3-5th grade

9:30 a.m. in-person adult and 11:00 a.m. via Zoom (contact church office for link)

- All three of these rates continue to climb, that is, they're getting worse the longer the pandemic continues.

- Consistent with pre-Covid percentages, anxiety, depression, and suicide are most prevalent among the younger generations.





- These percentages represent significant increases this year when compared with previous years, specifically the rate of anxiety symptoms is 3x higher than 2019, the rate of depression symptoms is 4x higher than 2019, and those considering suicide has doubled compared to 2018.

Responding to this report, Anna Mueller, a professor of sociology at the Indiana University Bloomington said that the CDC data demonstrates that, “The breakdown in our society, the breakdown of the safety net, the breakdown of economic security is taking a massive toll. These breakdowns really show how crucial economic stability and security are to an individual's well-being.” And specifically about the alarming trends among 18-24 year olds, she adds, “They're watching their world crumble, and probably struggling to imagine a future...What is the world going to look like? What is college going to look [like]? What is employment going to look like if they were hoping to enter the labor force?”

Nadine Kaslow, a professor of psychiatry at the Emory University School of Medicine, has written in the response to the CDC data, “No matter how tired and burnt out we each are, we need to check in with people, to see how they're doing, to let people know that we care. People did a lot of that at the beginning of Covid, but as we get further along into what could be called the disillusionment phase, I personally think we're seeing a lot less of that. We have to be in this for the long haul.”

So how should this inform us at KirkWood? Let me suggest the following:

- **Pay Attention To Your Own Spiritual Practices:** The emotional/relational needs around every one of us right now are astronomical, but you can only give what you have, that is, you can only give water from your well if there's actually water in it. You've nurtured your spiritual life and rhythms for years for this very moment: root yourself deeply in quiet prayer, meditation, immersion in nature, spiritual reading, silence/solitude, soulful reflection, joyous and heartfelt conversations, uplifting music, etc., and from these sources let love, kindness, initiative, compassion, and generosity flow. Give out of what God will give you when you seek and find Him. If it's true that we can do this with Jesus, it's equally true that we most certainly can't do without Him.



- **Assume That Every One is Hurting**: That ornery store clerk, that grumpy congregant, that stoic relative, that moody teen...yeah, they're all hurting, all grieving the world that Covid is irrevocably altering. Every single person you encounter needs a little light, because the world seems to be getting darker by the day. Hurting people aren't very rational or level-headed on occasion, so let's stop expecting that of each other; we're all just dancing a Covid jig right now, swaying, and stumbling on the deck of a storm-tossed ship. So what if you took upon yourself to be a relational "dumping ground," giving your friends, acquaintances, and coworkers the chance to unload the ways they're being affected adversely by Covid, and how deep their fears and frustrations run? And what if you committed to praying about what they shared with you?
- **Take The Initiative**: Don't wait for someone to reach out to you, reach out to them first. Let your love be a verb, not a noun. What if you made the commitment to encourage verbally at least one non-family member every day, by calling, emailing, or writing a note? Imagine what difference we might make...in its own way, might it not be impactful as wearing a mask to not spread the virus to others?

Expect that we'll try and keep all of KirkWood laser focused on being the community of Christ for a time such as this. And we'll stay at it as long as Covid keeps us in its clutches, for we will not "grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9). We need to come at this as "a long obedience in the same direction," as the late Eugene Peterson once put it.

So keep being creative about how we can gather and care for one another, keep going out of your way to check on each other, keep using Zoom and the parking lot to meet and share, keep carrying one another emotionally, keep inviting others who are struggling into our nurturing family of faith, keep imagining new ways we can be the church together and for our community, keep being the solution and not the problem, and keep assuming that we are the vanguard of God's Kingdom and will lead the way toward His new creation.

Deus dat incrementum – God, give steady growth!

Warmly,
Chris



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November Dates

November 1 - All Saint's Day


November 1 - Daylight-Saving Time ends

November 3 - Election Day

November 11 - Veterans Day

November 26 - Thanksgiving

November 29 - First Sunday of Advent



**ARMOR UP with
KIRKWOOD's
BIBLE SCHOOL**

Using clues from the King's Bible, translated by our trusty dragon, Sparky, we are finding pieces of the Armor of God.


September: Belt of Truth

October: Breastplate of Justice

November: Shield of Faith/Helmet of Salvation

December: Shoes of Peace

Lessons are geared for ages 3 years old through 5th grade. In-person learning is available each Sunday at 9:30 am or packets can be picked up for virtual learning.





MISSION

Mission

KirkWood Food Drive

The Mission committee will conduct another food drive on Saturday, November 14th. Covid-19 shows no signs of slowing down and the economy is only slowly recovering. This puts continued pressure on our area Food Banks and Pantries to meet the needs of families. The food drive will be done as a “drive-through” in the KirkWood parking lot from 9:00 a.m. to noon. We will accept non-perishable food items, checks to the Peninsula Food Bank or to St. Luke’s Food Pantry, and cash donations. Please support this very critical mission as many families on the Peninsula are hurting. If you have questions, contact Jen Carter, Elisabeth Kelly, or Arba Williamson.

Operation Christmas Child



It’s that time of the year, time to pack shoeboxes for **Operation Christmas Child**. These gifts are needed now more than ever for children in need around the world. Shoeboxes and information on **How To Pack A Shoebox** are available in the narthex. Completed shoeboxes, along with a \$9.00 donation to cover shipping, are due by **Sunday, November 15th**. Empty shoeboxes can be delivered to you and then picked up when completed.

New this year: samaritanspurserg/buildonline offers the option of prepacked shoeboxes at a cost of \$25.00 that includes the \$9.00 shipping fee. For more information, contact Wendy Barrick at (757) 870-9642.



BLOOD DRIVE & HANGING OF THE GREENS

Outreach & Worship



Blood Drive

The final 2020 KirkWood Blood Drive is scheduled for **THURSDAY, November 19th, from 2:00-7:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall.** We will again be able to host the drive at the church, practicing all proper distancing requirements. As of the Kronicle deadline we are still not able to provide a meal at this drive, due to the restrictions. The Red Cross requires everyone to wear a mask during the drive and temperature checks prior to entering the drive area. Donors can schedule their appointments by going online to www.redcrossblood.org; sponsor code "KirkwoodPC". If you would like to save yourself some time on drive day, you can access the **RAPIDPASS**. RAPID PASS lets you do the prescreen process from your mobile device or computer and can save you as much as 15-20 minutes when you get to the drive. The Red Cross will send a link to your email the day of the drive. If you have questions or would like to inquire as to how you can help at upcoming drives, please contact Cathy Hudgins at (757) 869-2645 or hudgepudge@aol.com. There is an urgent need for all types of blood now and always. Please prayerfully consider coming out and donating this lifesaving need. For planning purposes, the 2021 dates are February 18th, May 20th, August 19th, and November 18th.

Hanging of the Greens

We are rapidly approaching the holiday season. With that, we will be having our traditional Hanging of the Greens on the evening of November 28th! Like the past few years, we will combine it with a social event, but adapting it to meet current requirements. For the decorating side, we are asking households to sign up for a specific area they will decorate. Volunteers should use the sign-up genius link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C44AEAE28ABF94-hanging>. As for the social side, we will host another of our popular Zoom socials with games and live interactions with those doing the decorating. Details will be emailed out as we get closer!



OCTOBER 2020 SESSION SUMMARY

Session

- Approved a new adult Sunday school curriculum, as well as the new 9:30 a.m. Sunday school class (to meet in room 5, with Joyce Armstrong leading)
- Discussed and approved November 15 and 22 being devoted to stewardship, including the collection of pledge cards
- Discussed and approved the new class of Elders, and approved a congregational meeting on November 1st at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom to vote on that slate of candidates
- Approved the idea of putting the Christmas story along the prayer path in the woods for Advent this year
- Approved the Hanging of the Greens for November 28th
- Approved a Covid Church van usage policy
- Debriefed the first Zoom Session/Congregational Q&A, held on October 14th in the evening

IN-PERSON SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR ADULTS

Christian Education

Joyce Armstrong will teach an in-person Sunday school class for adults, beginning Sunday, November 1st, at 9:30 a.m. It will be held in the church library (last room on the left, across from fellowship hall.) Due to Covid restrictions, the class is limited to seven students, plus Joyce, and masks are required.

During the first session, Joyce will discuss with those present, a direction for the study. She will present several possible ideas to the group. As time allows, she will also present a generic mini-lesson. Please contact Joyce at jarmstrong96@aol.com if interested or for more info.



KIRKWOOD SILVER & GAME NIGHT ON ZOOM

Congregational Care

KirkWood Silver

What a perfect day KirkWood Silver had for our parking lot picnic on October 15th! The weather couldn't have been more 'golden'! It was fantastic to see 27 of our KWS group circled up in a very large oval on the far side of the parking lot.

Since that event was so successful, we think we should try again! On Thursday, November 12th, KWS will have **Pizza in the Parking Lot** at 11:30 a.m. The plan is to order personal pan pizzas from Pizza Hut, offering a choice of four toppings: cheese, pepperoni, sausage, or veggies (just one topping per pizza, please.) The cost will be \$5.00, to minimize making change. Bring your chair, beverage of choice, and mask, of course.

To make your reservation and tell us which topping you'd like, please e-mail Wanda and Jim at wandjbirch@verizon.net, or call us at (757) 868-8651, no later than Monday, November 9th.

Game Night on Zoom

Twice now in October, Congregational Care has sponsored game nights for KirkWoodians – first for a scavenger hunt and most recently for a “name that tune” night (with the excellent help of Ann Brown.) Attendees seemed to really enjoy “getting out” on the internet to see other KirkWood folks and enjoy some friendly competition. Here is a photo of the attendees for the “name that tune” game.



We plan to continue these game nights every other week with the links being sent via email and announced in the online KirkWood Sunday Bulletin. The games are held at 7:00 p.m. on alternating Sunday nights. The first 15 minutes are for us socializing, the next 30 minutes are for the game of the night, and the final few minutes are for reflecting on our game experience and suggesting other ideas for games, or just chatting. The next game night will be on

November 1st. Please join us!



WORSHIP SERVICES UPDATE

Worship

As KirkWood’s worship service continues to grow and adapt, it seems there is a different face returning to in-person worship each week. We also are reaching an estimated 25-30 devices watching each live online service, with an additional 100-120 watching after the service has ended. Some of those watching online are people who would likely never have crossed KirkWood’s threshold.

For those of you who may not have seen, there are some subtle changes you may not have noticed:

- We have reintroduced different aspects, such as bells, flutes, responsive readings, and prayers in unison.
- The Worship Band will be taking one week off each month. They have provided music for every service since we started recording in the spring and definitely deserve time to rest to prevent burnout.
- Every week, the worship leaders convene to discuss how each upcoming service can have all its components fully integrated, supporting a common message.
- We had a unique interview-style message on October 18th.
- Different aspects of the service have been shifted around a bit from week to week as we attempt to create the best overall message.

Our ultimate goal is to enable you to worship God as best as possible. With this, we continue to welcome ideas and feedback. If you are one of our YouTube viewers, please subscribe to our channel, as that will notify you when we share a new video. Plus, once we reach 100 subscribers, we gain some YouTube benefits, and we are close! And most of all, thank you for your prayers - we have truly felt God’s guidance through all that we have done.



WORSHIP CHOIR

Worship

Last spring as the reality and magnitude of Covid slowly set in, I was personally devastated to realize that it wouldn't be safe for our KirkWood choirs to continue as usual. After a while my focus began to shift from what we couldn't do to the question of what we might be able to do right now and how we might make it happen.

While not ideal, we began to have Worship Choir rehearsals via Zoom. By not ideal, I mean that because everyone is muted as I play the accompaniment and choir parts, when everyone sings along, I can't hear them to make corrections. So we are on the "honor system" and they let me know how they did. So far, the choir members report that they have **never sounded better!**

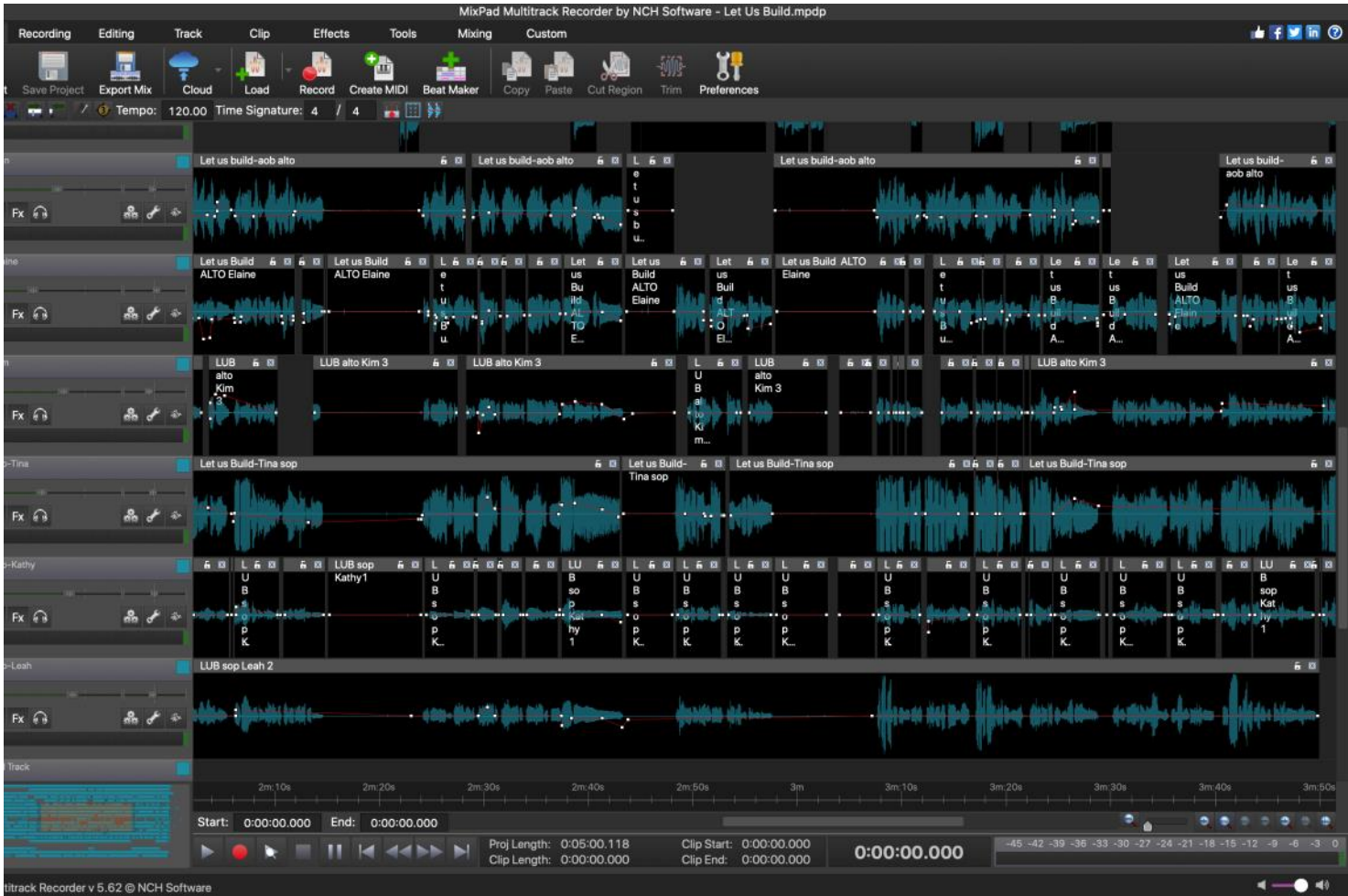
So we have found a safe way to rehearse. But what about the choir singing during worship services? Certainly not possible now for safety reasons.

Thus began the KirkWood recording project. Individual choir members now record their voice at home using their phones and computers. This was a HUGE leap of faith for us. Most of us are not trained soloists, and are accustomed to singing in a group, not sending in a recording of our solo voice! But we have amazingly brave people in our choir who are willing to step out of our their comfort zones.





The recordings are later combined to make a virtual choir. Jamie Mershon spent several hours teaching me how to use an audio mixing program. Here is a screen shot of the program at work. Each of the wavy blue lines is a choir member.



The magic happens after aligning and balancing the tracks. What was a bunch of people singing alone at home becomes a pretty good approximation of our group singing together.

Thanks to Zoom, Mixpad, and YouTube, our choirs can now provide music for KirkWood worship services. But only because so many of us were willing to try something new.



PROPERTY & FACILITIES

Property & Facilities

The P&F committee has two opportunities for you to help out in November so please consider coming out to help:

The Fall Clean Up and Pumpkin Patch Removal day is November 7th from 8:00-11:00 a.m. (but usually completed by 10:00 a.m.) If you are able to help, we will be trimming trees, raking leaves, general grounds maintenance, and removing the entire pumpkin patch. We would love to have you for whatever time you can afford; either the entire time or even one hour. Bring a rake, gloves, wheelbarrow, etc.

We are in the process of continuing the remodeling of the church. The painting of the hallways is complete and now it is time to replace the flooring. We will also update and re-hang the bulletin boards. We can use all levels of talent. Here are the planned days for replacing the flooring:

- 11/9 (8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.): Remove carpet in hallways and start painting the trim on bulletin boards
- 11/10 (3:00-8:00 p.m.): Complete removal and start installing flooring and continue painting the trim on bulletin boards
- 11/11 (8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.): Continue installing flooring and continue painting the trim on bulletin boards
- 11/12 (3:00-8:00 p.m.): Continue installing flooring
- 11/13 (8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.): Continue installing flooring

- 11/16 (8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.): Install trim and hang bulletin boards
- 11/17 (3:00-8:00 p.m.): Install trim and hang bulletin boards
- 11/18 (8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.): Install trim and hang bulletin boards

We will need 8-10 people each shift. Please sign up in the narthex or contact Kirk Reno.



A major thank you goes out to all of our summer lawn mowing teams for spending some of your summer keeping the grounds looking great. We will be looking for help again next year.

Upcoming events: there will be a leaf blowing and clean up day later in November or early in December once the leaves really start falling. Watch the Sunday bulletins for more information in the coming months.

If you are interested in joining the P&F committee to help keep the church in good working order, we meet the first Tuesday of the month in the sanctuary. We can use all levels of talent; please contact Kirk Reno or Scott Shoun.

TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURE

Stewardship


Stewardship season is upon us – but what does that mean?

One of the dictionaries’ (Merriam-Webster.com) definitions of stewardship is “the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one’s care.”

This time of year gives us the opportunity to reflect on how we spend our time, money, and what talents we can share with others. It is a time to renew and re-commit to supporting KirkWood’s mission – A Christian Community Growing Together, Knowing, Loving, and Serving Christ, to make Him known to all.

Time & Talents - Consider participating on a committee at KirkWood to help plan church-wide events (Congregational Care,) care of our facility (Property & Facilities,) or reach out to others through the Mission and/or Outreach committees. Opportunities abound to help others and grow personally, and perhaps professionally, and meet others. Think about if you are called to join or lead a small group or how you can help with KirkWood’s children’s ministry or maybe teach a Sunday School class. God will equip those who serve!





Treasure - Pledges for 2021 help Session plan for the coming year. KirkWood has expenses that keep the lights on, maintain the facility, and provide a clean safe church environment, compensate our staff, and grow our ministries and missions. Prayerfully consider pledging an amount for 2021. Your commitment by making a pledge shows your support of KirkWood's mission and enables the Session to better plan to support KirkWood's mission.

We will have two Sunday mornings, November 15th and 20th, dedicated to Stewardship. The theme for the two weeks will be Stewardship for all ages. Many people from the congregation will be speaking. God loves a cheerful giver!

