

THE ENLIGHTENER

Epiphany United Church of Christ, St. Louis, Missouri

December 2017 / January 2018



FROM THE BEEbe HIVE

Let Not the Darkness Overcome Us

One of the things that pleases me about Epiphany Church is the way we listen and discern what we understand to be the leading of God. This is especially true of the meetings of our worship committee (made up of all the leaders of our worship.) It seems always that we wrestle with a question and then, out of the wrestling, someone comes up with the right solution.

In This Issue

- Christmas Eve and Blue Christmas service times
- Alex Garcia in sanctuary
- A party to share Christmas
- Much more!

That was the case when we chose our theme for this Advent season. Reading the lectionary texts and considering the way things are today in our world, we sought for the right theme.

(continued on page 2.)

Holiday Services

Join us for the **Blue Christmas Service**, also known as Longest Night Service on **December 21, at 7 p.m.** Blue Christmas is a service of reflection and sacred space to make room during the busy holiday season for those who might be struggling and having a hard time participating in seasonal festivities. The service is held on the night of winter solstice, which is the longest night of the year. Come, share sacred space, and light a candle of hope to brighten the longest night. All are invited, we hope to see you there.



We invite you to join us on **Christmas Eve Day**—this year that is Sunday. Come in the **morning at 10:30** for our Sunday service, the fourth Sunday of Advent when the theme of the Advent Wreath is love. Our service will celebrate the Love that “came down at Christmas.”

In the evening, at 7:00 p.m., we will gather again to celebrate Christmas Eve with candles and carols. This is one of the most beautiful services of the year and we hope you will be a part of our church family that evening.

(Continued from Page 1)

And then one of us said: "Let not the darkness overcome us." We all came to realize that those were the right words for this season this year. And then, of course, we soon found that the appropriate scripture is from the first chapter of John's Gospel, "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it." (John 1:5)

Those are the right words for our time and this time. In spite of all the sad and fearful things that are happening, and the wonder if we will get through them, the Light is stronger than the darkness and we will not only survive but thrive. The words are often quoted from Dr. King, but they are worth repeating here: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness. Only light can do that."

And so, I wish for you in this holiday season, what is the underlying theme of Advent, whether that is the hope for the Christ Child or the hope for God's New World, both Advent themes.

And so I wish for you the joy of the overcoming Light.

Grace and peace,

David Beebe, interim pastor



Lectionary Readings for *December 2017*

You can deepen your experience of worship by reading the scriptures in advance of Sunday. Worship services are often (but not always) based on one of the lessons of the week.

December 3

Isaiah 64:1-9
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Mark 13:24-37

December 10

Isaiah 40:1-11
Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
2 Peter 3:8-15a
Mark 1:1-8

December 17

Isaiah 61:1-4, 88-11
Psalm 126
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
John 1: 6-8, 19-28

December 24

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Luke 1:46b-55
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38

December 31

Isaiah 61:10-62:3
Psalm 148
Galatians 4:4-7
Luke 2:22-40

If you have a story or experience to share in *The Enlightener*, please contact Wes Buchek or email it to:
epiphany.adm.assist@juno.com

Lectionary Readings for

January 2018

You can deepen your experience of worship by reading the scriptures in advance of Sunday. Worship services are often (but not always) based on one of the lessons of the week.

January 7

Genesis 1:1-5
Psalm 29
Acts 19:1-7
Mark 1:4-11

January 14

1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20)
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18
1 Corinthians 6:12-20
John 1:43-51

January 21

Jonah 3:1-5, 10
Psalm 62:5-12
1 Corinthians 7:29-31
Mark 1:14-20

January 28

Deuteronomy 18:15-20
Psalm 111
1 Corinthians 8:1-13
Mark 1:21-38

How to Be a Part of Our Neighborhood

~ David Beebe

It was refreshing to me this past summer the way that our adult discussion class got its teeth into the book, *The New Parish**. It was even more refreshing to see the way that people came and participated this fall in the discussion class series on getting to know our neighbors. That is an important part of our task in this transition time.

It is, however, not an easy task. It was one thing to learn how to relate to people as this neighborhood changed and became a place where people were in need. We learned to reach out and help

them. It has become more difficult to learn how to relate to our neighbors as new neighbors have moved in, gentrifying Benton Park East if not yet Benton Park West. And that is more difficult because many of our newer neighbors belong to those cohorts that don't see the church as relevant to them or to their world. How do we "neighbor" them? How do we find out what God is doing among them so that we may join in?

(continued on page 4.)



The Christmas Fund offering for retired church workers and the Emergency Fund will be received on Christmas Sunday morning, Dec. 24, and in the evening at the Christmas Eve candle service at 7 p.m.

Bumper Sticker Language

by David Beebe

Sometimes it seems to me that conservatives and liberals are grasping for similar goals but in opposite ways. Sometimes



we need to hear what lies under the “bumper sticker” slogans. For instance, liberals often speak of “Peace with Justice.” Conservatives often speak of “Law and Order.” While the mood – and more importantly the methods -- are very different, there is some relationship between the concerns. “Law,” after all, should seek for “justice.” “Order,”



after all, should bring “peace.” Perhaps we should try to understand each other.

(continued from page 3.)



And then, although we studied the need not to be “above” the neighborhood, how do we deal with the fact that the United Church of Christ, by its very nature, is a church that appeals across a wide swathe? Many of our members, in fact most, do not live in our Benton Park neighborhood. We are seeking for answers.

One answer, suggested in *The New Parish*, is that we need not only to find out what God is doing here but also to find out what God is doing in the places where we live and to join God in both places.

It is the question our pastoral Search Committee is asking of us: “Where is God leading us in the future?”

** The New Parish: How Neighborhood Churches Are Transforming Mission, Discipleship and Community Paperback – May 4, 2014, IV Press. by Paul Sparks, Tim Soerens, Dwight J. Friesen*



Noi\$y Offering will go Toward Sanctuary

The next three months of noisy offering will be going to support the sanctuary of Alex Garcia at Christ Church UCC, in Maplewood.

Alex Garcia is currently being sheltered there after coming to the U.S. from Honduras 13 years ago seeking safety and a better life. Until now, the government has acknowledged Alex's responsibilities as a devoted father

and husband and has granted yearly permission to stay. Recently ICE denied Alex's request and gave him a date to report for removal from the U.S. He is a family man, hard worker, and a valued member of his rural Poplar Bluff MO community.

For more information, visit: www.maplewooducc.org/sanctuary.html.

Read more about Alex on page 7.

“Both Sides Now”

Recently my good friend, Rabbi Richard Sherwin, in Orlando, FL, sent his usual Sabbath Eve reflection. This one struck me as a keeper and I have obtained permission from him to share it with you. It speaks well to our time – we need to learn to see “both sides now.” Besides, it illumines an interesting piece of biblical history. Modern Judaism descends from the School of Hillel. ~David Beebe

Dear Friends:

Judy Collins, with her full and folksy voice, sang Joni Mitchell's words that touched the generation of the late 1960s: “I've looked at clouds from both sides now, up and down . . . I've looked at love from both sides now, from give and take . . . I've looked at life from both sides now, from win and lose. . .”

Hillel and Shammai were two Elders who led discussions of religious practice and ethical standards at the end of the first century, BCE. While they had divergent methods, they respected each other's goal of strengthening the community through Halakha, standards of practice and approach to life. (continues on page 8.)



A Party to SHARE CHRISTMAS!

3-5 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 17

Fellowship Hall, Epiphany United Church of Christ
2911 McNair Ave.

NO SIGN-UP — JUST SHOW UP!

BRING to SHARE (ALL are OPTIONAL): Christmas cookies and other seasonal treats, greeting cards (both blank and signed and addressed), 2018 calendars, stocking stuffers, other tokens of the holidays. Voices prepared to sing Christmas carols. Light hearts and happy spirits.

EXPECT to TAKE AWAY: Above items brought by your neighbors as well as finger food provided by Epiphany, and gift cards to Walgreens, Shop n Save and Schnucks provided by Joint Neighborhood Ministry.

*Gift Card Drawing
at 4:30*

*Carol Singing!
Children's craft activity!*

COOKIES!

A Christmas Verse

Let Not the Darkness Overcome Us

*"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."
John 1:5, NRSV (from the earliest Christmas Eve Gospel)*

There is a high wind and the high seas are raging.
The storm nears and we fear the eye of the storm.
The night thickens and the stars fade away.
Watchers sent from Heaven, pray what news you bring?

Though the storms rise they cannot flood the world.
Though the night grows heavy with the dark
it cannot quench the light,
for the torch flames again in the wind
and its rays pierce the darkness.
It is the torch beside the cradle and the Child.

~ David Beebe
Christmas, 2017



Sanctuary for Alex Garcia

As mentioned on page 5, Alex Garcia is currently being sheltered in Christ Church UCC, in Maplewood. In November, *The River Front Times* featured Alex's story. You can read the entire article [here](#). Or, check out an excerpt of the article on page 15.

(continued from page 5.)

In the centuries that followed, the disciples of each Sage created academies, appropriately designated as the School of Hillel and the School Shammai. The Talmud (the Jewish post-biblical text written during the time of the Christian testament) records over 300 respectful debates, reflecting the narrower, more parochial perspective of Shammai, and the broader, more inclusive perspective of Hillel.

One debate raged between the School of Shammai and the School of Hillel for three years, each one asserting, “The standard is in agreement with our views.” Finally, a Bat Kol *(a Divine Voice) was heard, asserting, “Both views are equally valid in the eyes of God.” After a short pause, the Divine Voice continued, “The standards must be applied according to the views of Hillel’s School.”

The students in both academies were puzzled: If both views are equally valid in the eyes of God, then what entitled Hillel’s ruling to prevail? They discerned the answer: Hillel’s argument was colored by words that were kind and modest.

Hillel listened to the words of Shammai, seeing validity in their words. Jewish Tradition understood that the ultimate winner would be the one who understand their opponent’s perspective so well that they could articulate that view before they presented their own.

This became the model for healthy debate:

—Respect the view of the other as valid.

—Listen respectfully to the opposing perspective.

—Articulate the opposing view in the presence of its proponents, then present one’s own perspective.

This certainly would be a breath of fresh air in the world of politics today, wherein one side vilifies the other, categorically (and quite often disrespectfully), dismissing the view of those who disagree.

In today’s America, people are often less interested in listening to broad-casts than they are narrow-casts, confining focus only on those who agree: one watches CNN or FOX. We are living in an Either/Or society wherein one votes Republican OR Democrat, one follows a liberal agenda OR a conservative one, one seeks personal victory while another seeks social health. Why not a bit of both? Why not somewhere in between, even if closer to one side or the other? Why not?

(continued on page 9.)

* *literally “the echo of the voice.”*

(continued from page 8.)

Americans have become accustomed to living Either/Or politics, wherein one is right and the other, by definition, is wrong: me or you, us or them. I look forward to the day we live in a Both/And world, where both sides can respectfully disagree on the approach to fixing a problem, even while cooperatively negotiating and compromising to attain common objectives. It is the 2,000-year-old model of Hillel and Shammai, which is as viable today as it was in the first century.

I came across two quotes, one from a Democrat and one from a Republican. In a way not characteristic of America today, I agree with them both!

Democrat John F. Kennedy, the 35th President of the United States, articulated the philosophy of Both/And very clearly: "Let us not seek the Republican answer, or the Democratic answer, but the right answer. Let us not seek to fix blame for the past. Let us accept our [combined] responsibility for the future."

Republican Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States, shared this vision: "If the great American people will only keep their temper, on both sides of the line, the troubles will come to an end."

One day we will not have to worry about reaching across the aisle, because we will be standing together.

Shabbat shalom!
Rabbi Rick

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Lent Comes Early

Worship Committee meets Jan. 9

There is an old English carol with these words, "Easter would come when Christmas is done if Lent didn't fall between-o." This year Easter and Christmas are a lot closer because Lent comes in the middle of February. Ash Wednesday is Feb. 14.



This means that our worship committee needs to meet early in January to prepare for the Lenten season. **Please, all preachers and liturgists, plan to meet in the Council room on Tuesday evening, Jan. 9 to begin these plans.**



Acoustic Evenings **@Epiphany**



Epiphany is launching a spring concert series:
Acoustic Evenings at Epiphany, in 2018.

Save the dates now for 2018:

Feb. 17 — *Brian Curran of the Dust Covers*

April 14 — *Mayor Taylor and Pete Ruthenburg*

May 19 — *The Wilhelms (John Wendland and Andy Ploof)*





HOSPITALITY SCHEDULE

- 1st Sunday: Gail Auhmada
- 2nd Sunday: Lois Yatzeck
- 3rd Sunday: Will you sign up?
- 4th Sunday: Will you sign up?
- 5th Sunday: Dorothy Gannon & Jeanette Oxford

USHER SCHEDULE

- 1st Sunday: Will you sign up?
- 2nd Sunday: Wes Buchek
- 3rd Sunday: Will you sign up?
- 4th Sunday: Will you sign up?
- 5th Sunday: Wes Buchek



Stewardship Update

For 5 months
ending October 2017

	Actual	Budget
	YTD	YTD
Income:		
Contributions	\$ 22,852	\$ 25,416
Memorials	100	0
Special Appeals	1,685	1,500
Fundraisers	2,703	1,500
Facilities Rental	2,560	2,991
Urban Mission Exp.	8,775	8,250
JNM Utilities	1,200	0
Interest	88	81
Parsonage	4,824	4,781
e-scrip	45	103
Other	373	0
Total Income	\$ 45,205	\$ 44,622
Expenses:		
Mission:	3,539	4,084
Christian Educ./Camp	150	209
Worship & Leadership	20,178	21,763
Comm./Evangelism	2,246	2,466
Hospitality & Insurance	5,846	7,108
Utilities	4,541	5,631
Other	1,676	2,400
Total Expenses	\$ 38,176	\$ 43,661

December Calendar

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	30	

December 1—Friday

December 2—Saturday

10 a.m. Memorial service for John Todd and Mike Jones

December 3—Sunday

9:15 a.m. Christian Education
10:30 a.m. Worship with Communion

December 4—Monday

Epiphany Fundraiser at Café Piazza

December 5—Tuesday

6:30 p.m. Search Committee
7 p.m. Benton Park N'hood Association

December 6—Wednesday

8:30 a.m. Breakfast at Epiphany with Hope UCC
6 p.m. Meditation / Prayer Group

December 7—Thursday

11:30 a.m.—1 p.m. The Kitchen Table

December 8—Friday

December 9—Saturday

1:30 p.m. Christian Education Com

December 10—Sunday

9:15 a.m. Christian Education
10:30 a.m. Worship

December 11—Monday

December 12—Tuesday

6:30 p.m. Search Committee

December 13—Wednesday

8:30 a.m. Breakfast at Epiphany with St. Lucas UCC

December 14—Thursday

11:30 a.m.—1 p.m. The Kitchen Table

December 15—Friday

December 16—Saturday

December 17—Sunday

9:15 a.m. Christian Education
10:30 a.m. Worship with Communion
Choir practice after worship

December 18—Monday

December 19—Tuesday

6:30 p.m. Search Committee

December 20—Wednesday

8:30 a.m. Breakfast at Epiphany (St. John—Mehlville)
6 p.m. Meditation / Prayer Group
6:30 p.m. Church Council at Dorothy Gannon's

December 21—Thursday

11:30 a.m.—1 p.m. The Kitchen Table
6:30 p.m. Blue Christmas

December 22—Friday

December 23—Saturday

December 24—Sunday

7 p.m. Christmas Eve Service

December 25—Monday

Christmas Day

December 26—Tuesday

December 27—Wednesday

8:30 a.m. Breakfast at Epiphany with 1st Congregational UCC @ Wydown

December 28—Thursday

11:30 a.m.—1 p.m. The Kitchen Table

December 29—Friday

December 30—Saturday

December 31—Sunday

9:15 a.m. Christian Education
10:30 a.m. Worship

Our sympathies go to the families of long time member, Shirley Bax and a good friend of Epiphany, Alice Greenwood.



Members who cannot be with us but would love to hear from you!

John DeClue #529925 H.U.-9-B-11
Farmington Correctional Center
1012 W. Columbia
Farmington, MO 63648

RaeKwon Kinnard
raekinnard@gmail.com

David Hon
2005 Frenken St.
Pocahontas, AR 72455

Joan Kernebeck
c/o Altenheim
5408 S. Broadway, # 584
St. Louis, MO 63111

BIRTHDAYS!

December

Cass Kaufman 12/8
Jerry Markham 12/15
Beckie Tilinski 12/20
Ross Nichols 12/22

January

Joan Kernebeck 1/4
Janice Markham 1/25
Michael Vosler 1/28

Anniversaries

Lauren Verseman & Todd
Richardson 1/3

Read *The Enlightener* online at <http://epiphanyucc.org>. Click "Newsletter." Archived back issues also available.

MINISTERS AT EPIPHANY

Interim Pastor, *David Beebe*
President, *Rev. Dorothy Gannon*
Vice President, *John Scott*
Secretary, *Doug Kaufman*
Treasurer, *Linda Paglusch*
Asst. Treas, *Chris Heckendorn*
Financial Secretary, *Dorothy Gannon*
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Council Members: *Donna Schaeffer,*
Anne Little

Building Care, *Gail Ahumada*
Choir, *Dorothy Gannon*
Christian Educ. Chair, *Lois Yatzeck*
Church Office, *Anne Little*
Enlightener Editor, *Wes Buchek*
Hospitality and Usher Coordinator, *Wes Buchek*
Safe Church Coordinator, *Jennifer Everett*
Musician, *Peter Ruthenburg*

January Calendar

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	30	29	30	31		

January 1—Monday

January 2—Tuesday

7 p.m. Benton Park N'hood Association

January 3—Wednesday

8:30 a.m. Breakfast at Epiphany with Hope UCC

6 p.m. Meditation / Prayer Group

January 4—Thursday

11:30 a.m.—1 p.m. The Kitchen Table

January 5—Friday

January 6—Saturday

Epiphany Day

1:30 p.m. Fundraising Com

January 7—Sunday

9:15 a.m. Christian Education

10:30 a.m. Worship with Communion

January 8—Monday

January 9—Tuesday

6:30 p.m. Search Committee

6:30 p.m. Worship Committee

January 10—Wednesday

8:30 a.m. Breakfast at Epiphany with St. Lucas UCC

7 p.m. Transition Team

January 11—Thursday

11:30 a.m.—1 p.m. The Kitchen Table

January 12—Friday

6:30 p.m. Search Committee

January 13—Saturday

January 14—Sunday

9:15 a.m. Christian Education

10:30 a.m. Worship

January 15—Monday

6:30 p.m. Church Council

January 16—Tuesday

January 17—Wednesday

8:30 a.m. Breakfast at Epiphany (St. John—Mehlville)

6 p.m. Meditation / Prayer Group

January 18—Thursday

11:30 a.m.—1 p.m. The Kitchen Table

January 19—Friday

January 20—Saturday

January 21—Sunday

9:15 a.m. Christian Education

10:30 a.m. Worship with Communion

Choir practice following worship

January 22—Monday

6:30 Joint N'hood Ministry Board

January 23—Tuesday

January 24—Wednesday

8:30 a.m. Breakfast at Epiphany with

1st Congregational UCC @ Wydown

January 25—Thursday

11:30 a.m.—1 p.m. The Kitchen Table

January 26—Friday

January 27—Saturday

January 28—Sunday

9:15 a.m. Christian Education

10:30 a.m. Worship

January 29—Monday

January 30—Tuesday

6:30 p.m. Search Committee

January 31—Wednesday

8:30 a.m. Breakfast at Epiphany with Prince of Peace

An excerpt from The Riverfront Times; November 22, 2017

ICE Ordered Alex Garcia to Report for Deportation. He Took Sanctuary in a Maplewood Church Instead

By Doyle Murphy

Alex Garcia took refuge from federal immigration agents nearly two months ago inside an old brick church in the St. Louis suburb of Maplewood.

He is still there. He may be there for a long time — or maybe a short time. There is really no way to tell. The 36-year-old construction worker is hoping to return home to Poplar Bluff, Missouri, in time for the holidays. Even weeks ago, Thanksgiving had begun to feel like a long shot. But maybe Christmas. Christmas would be wonderful. He, his wife and his five kids get together with his in-laws and eat tamales on Christmas.

It's one of the rituals he has adopted during his thirteen years in the Bootheel. Bow hunting deer in the fall. Fishing with the kids in the summer. And work. Work is all the time. Work is how Garcia, an undocumented immigrant from Honduras, earned the respect of white, blue-collar guys in Butler County, where Donald Trump won 79 percent of the vote.

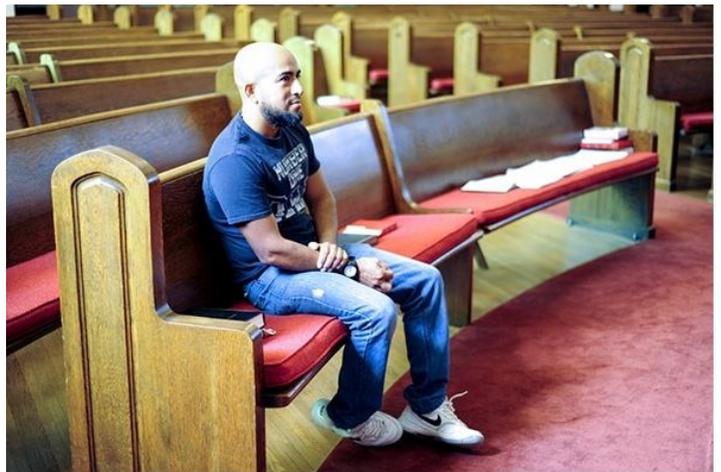
Bald with a bushy beard that sits low along his jaw, Garcia is a quiet force on the job site. Other contractors and business owners describe watching him crawl over roofs or pour concrete all day before he heads off to mow grass on his nights and weekends. They know he has five kids to support, and they respect him for doing it without welfare — which, they are quick to point out, is more than they can say for a lot of their neighbors.

"You need to get rid of about half the people in this town and keep him," says Jamie Tyler, a 38-year-old railroad worker who also runs his own construction company. ...

All across the country, undocumented immigrants are getting similar messages from ICE. The agency is under new directives to broaden the scope of its enforcement efforts. Trump, who campaigned on promises to deport all the "bad hombres" from the U.S., issued an executive order in January that expanded the focus from people who are national security threats to virtually anyone who has crossed the border without permission. Even those, like Garcia, who have been previously vetted and granted stays multiple times in the past have been targeted.

Now, his future is uncertain. His wife and kids are American-born citizens. Honduras, which has one of the highest murder rates in the world, is not a realistic option for his family, he says. If he's deported, he will be required to wait ten years before he can be considered for legal re-entry. What happens to his children, Garcia wonders. His youngest is three. His oldest, 12-year-old Ayden, was diagnosed in 2014 with Asperger Syndrome.

"They need me right now," Garcia says, adding later, "They always going to need me." ...



KELLY GLUECK

Our Purpose: We love God by: Accepting and affirming all, fostering growth, and working for social justice.

Our Commitments:

We are “Open and Affirming” – welcoming people of all sexual orientations and gender identities into church life and leadership.

We are a “Just Peace” Church – seeking to bring peace by working for social justice.

We are a “Whole Earth” Church – committed to caring for creation and bringing a ‘green’ consciousness to our living.

We seek to become a “Multicultural” Church – celebrating the diversity of racial and ethnic traditions.

WE SEEK TO BE MULTI-CULTURAL AND

ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

9:15 A.M. Christian Ed.

10:30 A.M. Worship

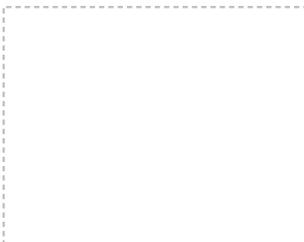
TELEPHONE: (314) 772-0263

EMAIL: epiphanyucc.1@juno.com ,
or epiphany.adm.assist@juno.com

WEBSITE: www.epiphanyucc.org

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December 2017 / January 2018



Epiphany United Church of Christ
2911 McNair Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63118
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