



Cherokee Park United Church

*Welcoming people of all ages, sexual orientations,
races, and ethnic origins*

A Progressive Congregation
Theological Elbow Room
Global Music
Community Connected
Kid Friendly

Newsletter December 2018

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
25	26	27 -Seeds OR 6 pm -Transition Tm 6:30 pm	28 Personnel Mtg 7 pm	29	30	1 <i>DEC</i> Hanging of the Greens 9-11 am
2 25th Anniv ordination celebration Pastor Joy <i>ADVENT</i>	3 Hannukkah	4 Sacred Space 4:30 pm	5	6	7 Women's Group 7 pm	8
9 Faith Life Min 11:30 am	10	11	12	13 Council 6:30 pm	14 ASDIC Fship Hall	15 ASDIC Fship Hall
16 Christmas Dinner 5 pm	17	18	19	20	21 Men's Group 6:30 pm	22
23	24 <i>Christmas</i> Eve Service 5 pm	25 <i>Christmas</i>	26	27	28	29
30	31	1 <i>JAN</i>	2	3	4 Women's Group 7 pm	8

Planning Ahead:

Jan 20, 2019, MLK joint worship here

Newsletter article deadline is the 20th of the month; please submit articles or ideas to kellystrebig@comcast.net
 -editor Susan Strebig
 -proofreaders Phyllis Clark, Mary Murphy
 -collate/mail teams (winter) Kathy Bergthold, Phyllis & Cal Clark



Hanging of the Greens - Please Come!

Saturday, December 1, 9:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Our tradition continues. In preparation for Advent and Christmas we will ornament the sanctuary and Fellowship Hall with greens and put up the Advent wreath as well as change out artworks. All are welcome to join in with the worship ministry to share in this preparation; there will be light refreshments and perhaps a few Christmas Carols.

Advent Journey

Worship Sunday, December 2

The Seeds of Resistance Ministry will lead us in worship to begin our journey toward Christmas Day.

And courageous Mary will lead us.

Make plans to join the caravan.



Women's Affinity Group

The Women's Affinity Group will meet on Friday, December 7 at 7 p.m. at the home of Jill Jackson. Light refreshments will be served and a lively discussion shared.

People willing to host future Women's Affinity Group gatherings are needed!

Upcoming meetings are scheduled for January 4, February 1, March 1, and April 5. Sign up at a meeting or contact Jill with your interest.

Just a reminder! For all the people who attended the Women's Retreat in October, please remember to pray for the person whose name you chose at the end of our time together. Please tell the person you've been praying for that you are their "prayer friend" on or around December 2.

Lesson in a Box

Thank you to the six people who have signed up to lead a children's group during part of our worship service any time a group of three or more children are present. Since we don't have a predictable number of children for Sunday School classes, this new offering will provide a fun alternative and be ready at any time. Jane Peterson and Faith Life Ministry have started this activity with the first lesson that is now available and more will be created. If you would be interested in doing this, even for just one time (taking place after the children's time during worship and to the end of worship) or if you just have fun ideas and would like to help put together some short lessons or crafts please contact Jane Peterson.

Keep our Children Warm

Tom Murphy tells us that GAP high school immigrant students still need many coats and jackets (also hats, gloves/mittens); they are unused to the cold and unprepared. They are already wearing donated jackets in the classrooms, so will need extra layers for the real winter here. Small (no XL's) sizes are best (and even smaller sizes for their younger siblings). A box will be placed at the back of Fellowship Hall to collect them.



Our Tree Traditions

Evergreen trees have been placed in our sanctuary during Advent for many years. Decades ago there were two very tall trees, including one where the grand piano is now located. The trees were always undecorated and unlit.



Then about five years ago, the Faith Life Ministry requested we light the tree, which was approved, and the following year children were involved to decorate the tree with ornaments donated by our members. Our tree is unlit for a few weeks, as a sign of our gradual preparation during Advent.

The ornaments are in a basket under the tree, and all are invited to help decorate with them at any time; and please help or encourage our children, teens, and visitors to enter into our group preparation in this way.



2019 Leaders' Retreat Invitation

Do you feel called to lead? Do you want to explore a topic among friends that challenges and nourishes our minds and souls? We're looking for a member, or members, to bring that energy to the 2019 Leaders' Retreat.

In 2017 and 2018 the Transition Team facilitated the Leaders' Retreat. Both events were very "business focused" (digging into church history, and writing a new mission statement). Both were valuable and successful. However, the Council would like this next retreat to be more "spirit focused" with discussion and activities that will hopefully help fill the wells of our souls.

Due to cost and scheduling changes, we will not be using the ARC Retreat Center in 2019. This is an opportunity to explore other possible venues and formats. We're looking for one, two, or more members who would like to take the lead in organizing the 2019 Leaders' Retreat. You don't need to have a concrete idea at this time, perhaps just an inkling of what you might want to do. If you are interested, please contact Pastor Joy.

Thank you for making CPUC's second Spaghetti-Bingo night a success! You donated a fascinating array of prizes. You showed up on a cold night. You welcomed family, friends and neighbors to our fellowship hall. You enthusiastically played round after round and donated more than \$400 to support the CPUC youth in their mission trip and other activities. It was a blast.



B I N G O

We are all winners on CPUC bingo night. Thanks for your loving care of our congregation's youth.



Notes from Pastor Joy

Why do we need Advent? Advent is a curious season in the Christian year. Perhaps before the identification of Christmas and consumerism, the Advent season inspired Christians to reflection, confession, and preparation. Beginning in the fourth century, Advent – like Lent – was seen as a time of fasting and penitence. Although Christmas parties and “hanging of the greens” potlucks keep many of us from fasting during Advent these days, the season is definitely a time of restlessness and reflection for those who take the season seriously.

Healthy spirituality lives between radical acceptance of life as it is and a holy restlessness, inspired by what could be in God’s realm of shalom. And Advent challenges us to live with the tension of “this is God’s world, filled with wonder and beauty” and “why are we aren’t we there yet? Why haven’t we reached the promised land, the beloved community of wholeness and healing?”

We have to start where we are in a God-filled, imperfect universe; but we cannot end our journey in accepting injustice, oppression, inequality, and disease.

I believe Advent inspires a prophetic unrest that challenges our current accomplishments, as well as admits our obvious failures in light of God’s realm of possibility, beauty, and wonder.

How do we practice Advent? We know that we neither can nor should ban Christmas carols, parties, and celebrations. But, we need not be so caught up in the merriment of the season that we fail to examine our own lives, our church, and political systems. Advent suggests a different type of spiritual practice in which feelings of peace do not lead to contentment with the way things are. The stillness of meditation inspires us to listen for the voice of possibility within our lives and communities. As an examination of conscience, we need to ask ourselves, “What is our deep restlessness? What unrealized dreams of community and spiritual growth still lure us forward? Where are we complicit in the injustice and suffering of the world?”

While we may not fast in the traditional sense of the word, Advent challenges us to a spiritual fast, a fast of holy mindfulness in which we attend to our values and behaviors. Can we celebrate Christmas with joy and generosity without being caught up in consumerism? Can we experience liberation from hurry and busyness during the “Christmas season” (that is, Advent)? Can we pause long enough to hear God’s voice
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and attend to God's vision for our lives and our role as God's partners in healing the earth? Can we give joyful gifts to loved ones and children without spending beyond our means, encouraging violence and greed, and succumbing to the temptation of useless and ecologically destructive purchases? This is a tall order, but it is the fast to which Advent calls us.

So, let us sing a few Christmas carols – even in church – for there is no need for liturgical fundamentalism! (Bruce Epperly) Let us rejoice in the wonders of a God-filled universe. Let us embrace the exuberance of the birthing of God. But, let us equally embrace the divine restlessness that calls us to expect more from ourselves as we seek to follow the one whose birth and future presence we await.

Annual Christmas Dinner and Music

December 16, Sunday, 5:00 p.m.

Join your friends for a potluck dinner and holiday cheer; you'll find the sign-up sheet at church. After eating we'll join in song for a few carols, and maybe a jam session. BYOI - bring your own instruments and we'll see what happens. We have many young members who are very talented and we hope to see and hear them also, as we often do during worship.



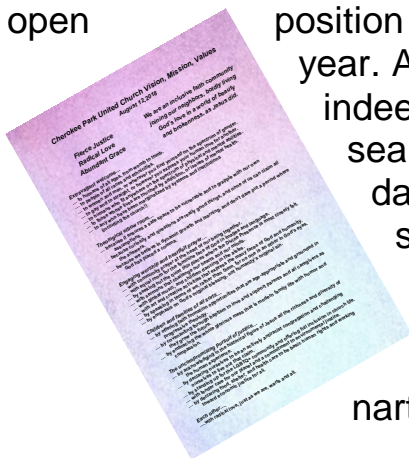
Christmas Eve Service

December 24, Tuesday, 5:00 p.m.

Please join us and invite your family and friends for the meaningful Lessons and Carols service. We will light candles and hear the traditional story about the ongoing birth of a Savior. Please note Roses of Remembrance invitation on last page.

Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC)

The PNC is actively receiving candidate Profiles (UCC) and Personal Information Forms (PCUSA) for our called pastor position. Both denominations are advertising the open position based on the information the congregation gathered this past year. All those conversations, surveys and leadership meetings are indeed paying off! The task of discerning the Spirit's leading as we search for the best person to lead us into our visioned future is daunting and exciting. Thank you for your prayers, trust and support.



(Editor's note: a framed copy of our new vision, mission, and value statements is found above the visitors' desk in the narthex.).

Council Corner Highlights – October Meeting 2018

- Dates for special offerings for 2019 were approved. They will be noted on the church's electronic calendar.
- The Finance Team shared that we are \$9,000 behind in pledged offerings for 2018.
- The Personnel Ministry Team reported that the search for a Director of Music at Cherokee Park United continues. Prayers for qualified applicants are welcome.
- The Council renewed Pastor Joy's contract starting in January 2019. Provisions in the contract include procedures to follow if and when a new called pastor is hired.
- The Lay Ministry Team reported that the Lay Ministry Narrative has been updated and revised.
- The Council expressed thanks to the Outreach Ministry Team for the recent launch of a new and updated church website.

Your prayers are requested during this transitional period. Members are always welcome to attend meetings on 2nd Thursdays, (next meeting 6:30-9 p.m.), or share their ideas or feedback with Council members or Pastor Joy as we work together to discern our church's future, in faith and love.



Thank You – to all who quickly

responded on Pledge Sunday, November 18. It's never too late to bring or send in your pledge, but timely responses help the Finance Ministry to advise us on a balanced budget for next year.

Neighborhood House Free Food Store

Please remember to bring unperishable food, or cash - checks made out to Neighborhood House - on the first Sunday of each month. Our monthly food collection in the grocery cart in the front church entrance is donated to the Neighborhood House free food store in the Paul and Sheila Wellstone Center on Robie just off Cesar Chavez St. Thanks to Deborah Morse for delivering this nourishment to help others in need.



TRANSITION

TRANSITION

The transition period between called pastors is a time for us to clearly examine ourselves, actively listen for the Spirit, and transform our church to be Christ's body for our community, and our world, today.

The Transition Team and Pastor Joy have facilitated this process, working closely with the CPUC Council, various ministry teams, and the entire church. Some of the things we have accomplished thus far in the transition process:

- ☐ Counseled Pastor Joy as she began her ministry with us, to acclimate her to the community, and help identify areas to focus transition efforts.
- ☐ Worked with the CPUC Council to form a Stained Glass Task Force, which since inception has now evolved into the Sacred Space Ministry. Their efforts to transform our worship space will bear fruit for years to come.
- ☐ Worked with the CPUC Council to create a Personnel Ministry Team. Formalizing our staff hiring and management process will strengthen our church structure, while providing better support to our staff members.
- ☐ Conducted a Church Planning Inventory, a detailed survey of the church membership. We examined things like demographics, worship style, engagement, programming, and giving. This assessment helps us clearly understand who we are, our strengths, and the challenges we face.
- ☐ Conducted an Insite report about our community and surrounding neighborhoods to identify demographic information, religious beliefs, and needs of our neighbors.
- ☐ Facilitated a discussion with local community leaders about the needs around us, and what we as a faith community can do to answer God's call.
- ☐ Worked with the CPUC Council, Lay Ministry, and Ministry leaders to recommend restructuring and merger of various Ministry Teams.
- ☐ Facilitated the creation of new Mission, Vision, and Value statements for the Church. These statements reflect what we believe God is calling us to do. The statements will now guide our decision making as we endeavor to remain true to our core beliefs.

While the Pastor Nominating Committee has begun the important work of searching for our next called pastor, the Transition Team will continue our work to prepare the church for the next chapter in the life of CPUC. We are excited to continue doing the work of God.



Winter Parking

Johnson Funeral Home graciously allows us to use their parking lot; this is especially helpful in the winter when the streets are more narrow and ice-packed, as snow plows never quite get it cleared away. One driveway fronts on Manomin Av., but it is more conveniently accessed from King St. as then cars are oriented to the parking slots.

What's News?

Each month the chairpersons of ministries or organizers of programs are invited to submit articles for our monthly newsletter; but if I am missing some organizers, please let me know. Any individuals are also invited to inform the congregation about our many efforts and activities. Please email your articles and/or photos, by the 20th of the previous month, or phone. Or maybe you would just like to have more details - let us know if you need more information on any area or ministry.

Editor: Susan Strebig kellystrebig@comcast.net or 651-457-1404

Miscellaneous Items Desired:

- ♥ **toaster** in the kitchen, esp. a 4 slice - toast at fellowship might be a nice and easy option sometimes
- ♥ **small microwave** as ours is very old - no rotating plate
- ♥ tall, 5-6 ft. **artificial tree or plant** for the front entry way alcove just to see if that might help soften the hard lines



- ♥ long or short stemmed **pampas grass** to use in dried but organic arrangements in sanctuary or elsewhere

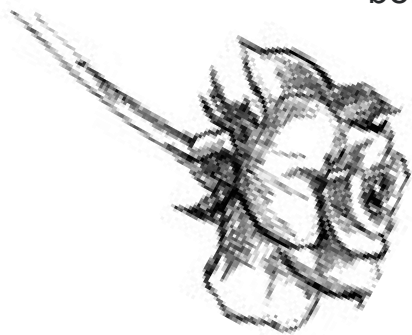


November - Our *Magnolia buds* already formed and awaiting the warmth to reblossom.

Roses of Remembrance for Christmas Eve

If you would like to remember a departed loved one this Christmas, please fill out the form below and place it in the box in the church entrance by Sunday, December 16.

Suggested donation is \$4.00/rose. Names of those being remembered will be printed in the bulletin if you so indicate below; after the service you are welcome to take your roses home with you.



Roses Reservation

Person(s) requesting remembrance rose(s)

_____ How many roses would you like? _____

Whom do you wish to remember? _____

Would you like their name(s) included in a list prepared for Christmas Eve? _____



Christmas Day ~ Peace and Blessings

wherever you may be celebrating.

Cherokee Park United Church

United Church of Christ/Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Open & Affirming, Multicultural, Antiracist

371 W. Baker Street

St. Paul, MN 55107

Sunday Worship: 10:15 a.m.

Rev. Joy Smith - Interim Pastor

651-227-4275

cpuc@usfamily.net

cherokeeparkunited.org

Darkness deserves gratitude.

It is the alleluia point at which
we can learn to understand
that all growth does not take place
in the sunlight.

from Joan Chittister,
in *Uncommon Gratitude*