



Cherokee Park (virtually) United Church

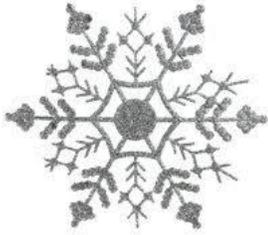
Fierce Justice ✨ Radical Love ✨ Abundant Grace
A Progressive Congregation
*Welcoming people of all ages, sexual orientations,
races, and ethnic origins*

Theological Elbow Room
Global Music
Community Connected
Kid Friendly

Newsletter January 2021

A New Year with the Women's Affinity Group

Friday, January 8, 7 p.m.



Join us for a friendly gathering of minds and hearts on January 8. (January 1st is a holiday, so we won't meet then.) Bring or think of something NEW to share on Zoom! It could be a Christmas gift, a resolution, or a new discovery in your life. All inspired ideas welcome! Please contact Jill Jackson if you have questions or ideas for future meeting topics.

Women's Affinity Group Zoom Meeting link.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84994330469?pwd=Ujh1NFhnN1Rlc3U3KzFnU1IzR3VXZz09>

Dial by your location +1 312 626 6799 US. Meeting ID: 849 9433 0469. Passcode: 119136

Men's Club resumes

After a hiatus during much of the pandemic, the men's gathering will resume. We will gather by zoom on **Friday, January 15, 2021**, at 7 p.m. Pastor Matthias will lead conversation, and we can decide together how we'd like to proceed in the future. Look for the zoom link in the weekly emails in early January.

Ministry and committee chair people - annual reports due

It's that time of year again; annual report information should be submitted to Mike Bates no later than **Sunday January 17, 2021**. We may think that not much has been going on during the pandemic restrictions, but that is not true. We have just been doing things in a different way! Share all the creative ways we have continued to be of service to others, and to strengthen our bonds with each other from a safe distance.

Adult Forum - Wednesdays at 7 p.m. starting January 6

Do you have a poem, song, quote, or photo that has great meaning to you? Something that speaks to you and your life when you need inspiration, direction, or perspective? Share something meaningful with CPUC friends and please bring your "touchstone" to share at the Adult Forum as we start 2021. If you'd like all to "see" your offering, please be ready to share your screen on Zoom. You can also send your item electronically to Pastor Matthias and he will put it on the screen. We look forward to rich discussions as we tell the stories of our lives in this way.



Join Zoom meeting at

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81725210424?pwd=cVrU0NHdHZSWjIBd2ZoMFdBNE1hQT09>

Meeting ID: 817 2521 0424. Password: 05697

From Pastor Matthias

Dear CPUC Community,



The threshold between years offers a moment to pause, as though on a mountain top, looking back at where we have been and ahead to where we will go. Though the shift of the calendar year is not observed officially in the liturgical calendar, it is an appropriate act of faith to reflect on where we and God have been, and where God might lead us next.

2020 has been a summarily hard year. From the pandemic that has devastated the world, taking 1.6 million lives (as of this writing) and separating many from loved ones, to the uprisings and justified rage at the murder of George Floyd by police and the long-standing trends of injustice which his death represents, to the anxiety and whirlwind of the national election and undermining of trust in our democracy (imperfect though it is) by some sworn to uphold it.

We too each experienced challenges, struggles, and losses this year, alongside moments of hope, gratitude, relief, and community.

Where has God been this year? I have seen God in the rise of people calling for justice, marching in the streets, choking through tear-gas. God was at the bedside of every person sick or dying of COVID. God was in the grief of what has been lost. God was in the masks and the distanced waves, the sharing of resources among neighbors and the creativity of hope, shared like small truffles of sweetness in hard times. Little graces when all felt hopeless. And God was in you. I saw that proved time and again in your acts of generosity, inspiration, perseverance, acts of love, and sacrifice. Where did you meet the Holy this past year?

As we look towards a new year with the start of 2021, there is some palpable hope in the bud. The first doses of coronavirus vaccines have been administered, offering some promise that we may be able to gather in person sometime in the coming year. So too is there hope of more competent and compassionate national leadership, after a degrading previous tenure, and movement toward justice marching on in ways both macro and local.

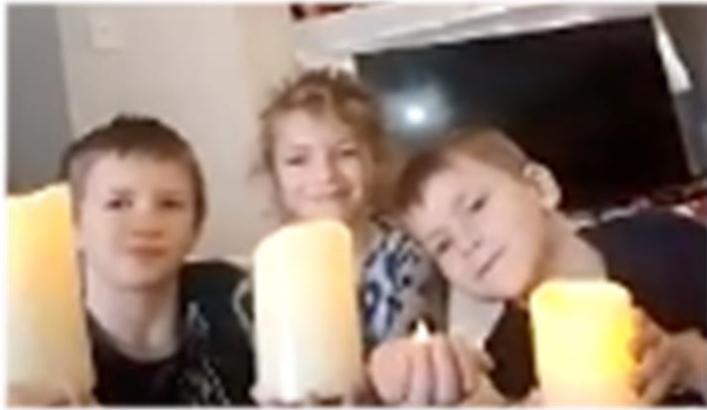
There is much unknown yet—particularly, when it might be safe for us to gather in-person again. Still, we give thanks for the God of Love, and Grace, and Justice who goes with us in all of life, and leads us on the path of liberation into 2021 and beyond.

Thank you for all the ways you manifest God's love in this world.

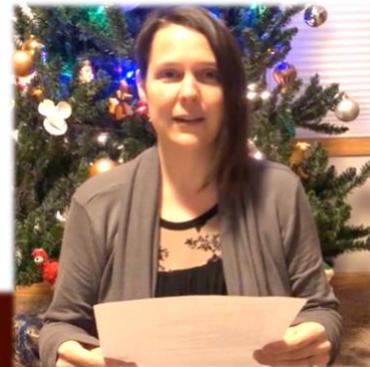
Pastor Matthias

Sharing one best part of 2020...

arrival of Isaac Olaf, December 19th at 6:47 p.m. Blessings to Sebastian, Sarah, and Rita on the expansion of their lovely family



and sending out 2020 with hearts full of Advent light...





At the December meeting, the council...

- ❖ set communion dates for 2021 as the first Sunday of each month during regular worship plus Ash Wednesday, and Maundy Thursday services, or other dates as may be required by superseding events, pandemics, emergencies, or vacations
- ❖ set the date for Congregational virtual Meeting Date (to present annual report, budget, and approve pastor's terms of call) as Sunday, January 31 after worship.
- ❖ set the installation date of new Council Members for Sunday, January 10 during worship, possibly prerecorded on zoom.
- ❖ received Pastor Matthias' report of much planning for Sunday worship during Advent, including meeting with Joanne and Sophie to involve many families in putting together video segments for a virtual nativity presentation for the Sunday after Christmas; Pastor continues to develop a relationship with Chaplain Ammon Bailey to support his prison ministry; Marvin Running River has found a publisher for his book; Pastor Bailey's wife will assist in developing a GoFundMe page for this ministry.
- ❖ moved to accept Lynne Bates' financial report; we can now submit the paperwork to forgive the PPP 15K loan; we will most likely end up within budget which includes a 36K reserve after expenses.
- ❖ moved to accept the Finance committee budget proposal which is the same as 2020 budget including the normal pay raises, although the hours paid for the three part time employees is greatly reduced as they are working less hours; the budget can be revisited as the year goes on. The Pastor Terms of Call still needs to be redone and submitted into the budget.
- ❖ accepted the Clerk's report from Mike Bates including: a listing of submissions for payment to various organizations that we support including United Theological Seminary, The Coalition (UCC GLBTQ organization), More Light Presbyterians, Interfaith Action of St Paul MN UCC Conference, and Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area - totaling \$5100 per year; and, with regret and gratitude, a letter of resignation from the council from Joy Sorensen-Navarre.
- ❖ discussed a request from Cherokee Heights Elementary School to use CPUC as an emergency evacuation location. Although the council is very much in favor of offering this hospitality, Pastor will talk to the school administration to get more details, especially regarding the covid-19 situations as they change over the next year.

- ❖ discussed and passed a motion to support a statement from "Roots and Restore St. Paul" asking the St. Paul city council to divert or create funds to deal with poverty, homelessness, lack of economic resources, and mental health crises - all situations that the police currently have to deal with but have no capacity to resolve. The passing of this motion at this meeting was critical as the city council met the next day.
- ❖ passed a motion to set the (all) Council zoom Training date as Sat. January 23.
- ❖ received ministry reports including: Outreach is working on a member and friends directory to be available soon; PMM is working on getting the heating system to respond more accurately; Lay Ministry still needs one more member representative (plus two council members to be designated at the January meeting.)
Next meeting January 12, 2021

Not too late: CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

Each year, Cherokee Park United Church participates in the Christmas Joy offering of the United Church of Christ/Presbyterian Church (USA). This special offering (which we split between our two denominations). This special fund goes towards emergency financial assistance to current and retired church workers (both clergy and lay) in critical situations. In addition, half of the offering that goes to the Presbyterian Church is used to support education and leadership development of students at Presbyterian-related schools. If you are able, we encourage you to contribute to this fund. You can give directly online, or you can send an offering to CPUC labelled "Christmas Joy."



January
Happy Birthdays
& Celebrations

05 - Sandy
05 - Bjorn
12 - Bob
❤️ 31 - Russ & Sandy

E-Directory for CPUC Members and Friends now available!

Cherokee Park United has gathered names and contact information for an electronic directory. People who share their up-to-date information and give their permission are included. Optional photos are also shared. We expect anyone who gets an electronic directory to keep information confidential and not share with anyone not listed. Hard copy directories are printed for

people who request them. Updates will be done from time to time. For more information contact Jill and the Outreach Ministry.

A Virtual Nativity

google link <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1m9EL5q1kLRD8dHI3fIIJvQXK3vOD05MS/view?usp=drivesdk>

Children have long been involved in an annual telling of the Christmas story; this year it happened during the Sunday after Christmas worship service, done by combining video and music segments from 25 families. Our amazing Sophie LeMeur started coordinating this from Montreal, through her tech magic, joining with our AV guru Tom Murphy, and organizers Jane Peterson and Joanne Sylvander, to create a moving recording to share with all. *Link to the whole service (nativity from minutes 21-38)*

<https://www.facebook.com/cherokeeparkchurch/videos/1341581636198197/>

In our midst we found actors, musicians, artists, vocalists, a puppeteer, sages, imaginers. Our homes became Bethlehem. We laughed, we cried, and we felt together once again, whole, and called to holiness.

Mary is visited by angel Gabriel.. then visits cousin Elizabeth...Joseph is awakened ... and told to stay with Mary, his pregnant betrothed....the innkeeper says "no room"....



the angel speaks to shepherds...a choir of angels sings..
the baby is born...Mary ponders all this in her heart...

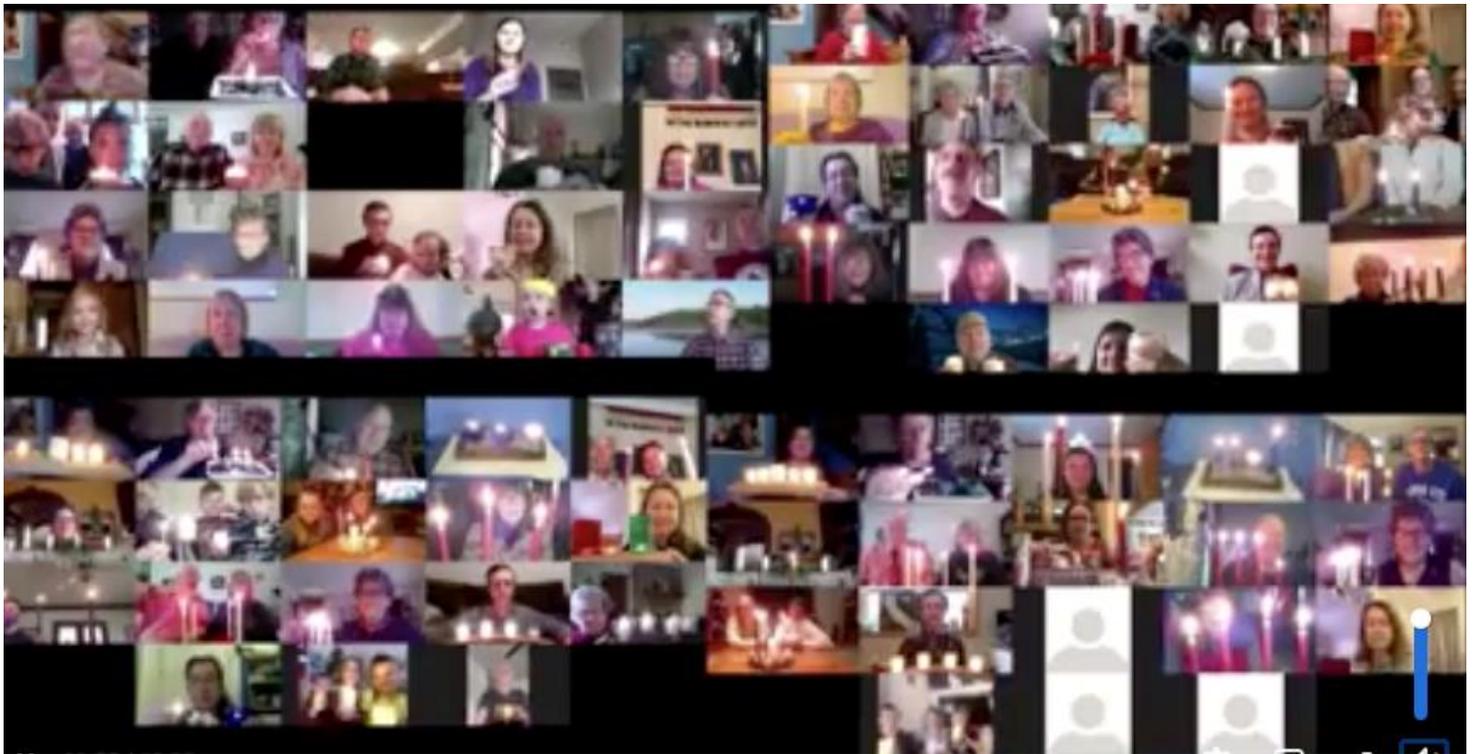


more shepherds and sheep spreading the good news...
Herod speaks to the Magi as they seek the Promise....and
bring their gifts to the child...then leave by a different
route...





Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared. Buddha



Contents from Tim Sitzack, Editor
The St. Paul Voice Jan 2021
McNamara named West Sider of the Year

Those who know Maria McNamara understand that she is passionate about seeing all members of society treated fairly. Her commitment to social justice helped earn her the West Side Citizens Organization's (WSCO) annual West Sider of the Year award, presented in late November. The award, given since the 1970's, recognizes an individual who contributes to the community through volunteerism or leadership on a major issue.

For more than two decades Maria has worked on local projects to promote racial equity, some of which have grown beyond the West Side. She was nominated by the Rev. Matthias Peterson-Brandt, her pastor at Cherokee Park United Church on the West Side; after coming to the church 18 months ago he quickly learned that McNamara was deeply entrenched in the neighborhood and was an invaluable resource for connecting him to issues and people in the community, as well as promoting that advocacy in church programs. He nominated her primarily for her commitment to social justice but noted that she is also active in the congregation on other ways, including serving on the church council.

McNamara grew up near Boston, Mass. in a small colonial town that she described as "very white, very homogenous, and fairly conservative." After receiving a degree in theater from the University of Massachusetts, she set off for New York City where she worked for 10 years, most notably with the Jim Henson Company helping design and build Muppet characters.

In 1984 she moved to St Paul's West Side and found work as a prop master with the Minnesota Opera and settled into her career and raising a family; her first impression of the West Side as that it "felt welcoming and interesting. Everything about it was diverse."



In 1995 she joined forces with a small group to create the West Side Family Center to support the many cultures there. "As a white person trying to navigate that situation, and understand the cultural and power dynamics was very disturbing and very enlightening at the same time," she said.

She became involved with ASDIC Metamorphosis, a then-West side-based non-profit that hosts antiracism dialogue circles, later becoming a facilitator, and helped start the Overcoming Racism Initiative at Cherokee Park United, that has since morphed into a citywide coalition; the annual conference last held at Metropolitan State University attracted nearly 500 participants.

McNamara has been active in the neighborhood in many other ways, serving on the WSCO board of directors and Neighborhood House, and active with the West Side Youth Farm, All Around the Neighborhood and Monday Night Live.

She said it's a joy that her own daughters are strong advocates for racial justice, and that some youth she worked with many years ago are now giving back to the community as adults, taking on leadership roles in the neighborhood and being vocal and engaged on the street.

Through it all she said she has learned the difference between doing *with* people instead of doing *for* people. The quote by the late Minnesota Sen. Paul Wellstone — "We all do better, when we all do better."—is particularly meaningful to her and aptly sums up her views on racial equality.

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., online only, until further notice

Pastor: Rev. Matthias Peterson-Brandt

651-227-4275

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cherokeeparkunited.org

Newsletter articles: submit by the 22nd of preceding month
to Susan at kellystrebig@comcast.net

With what Spirit do you want to enter the new year?

Pastor Matthias