



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 April 2021

When were you “touched by an angel?”

Share your story with the Women’s Affinity Group
Zoom on Friday, April 2, at 7 p.m.



Join us Good Friday to tell and listen about times we have felt guided by a power/spirit beyond earthly understanding. Nona says the Lakota words for “holy touch” are wakǰáŋ épaṭǰan (pronounced wah-kun e-pa-ten). Bring your voice, your ears, and your heart as we share our special stories. Please contact Jill Jackson if you have questions or ideas for future meeting topics. Stay tuned! With spring weather, we might be opting to gather in-person outside soon.

Women’s Affinity Group Zoom Meeting link.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84994330469?pwd=Ujh1NFhnN1Rlc3U3KzFnU1lzR3VXZz09>

or dial by your location = +1 312 626 6799 US.

Meeting ID: 849 9433 0469

Invite your family and friends to join us for our virtual Easter worship!

Our worship service on April 4th will be a celebration of the promise of Easter and springtime. You are encouraged to invite your family and friends to join us for our Facebook Live broadcast that day. Feel free to copy the “invitation” below and send it to your dear ones. Encourage them to make a “comment” so we know they are present. It will be nice to virtually meet some new folks at Easter worship. Thank you! Sometimes sending an invitation, and then a follow-up reminder before the service is helpful as Covid=lack of memory!!

Hello! You are invited to join an Easter celebration at my church – Cherokee Park United- on Easter Sunday! The service starts on Sunday, April 4th around 10:10 am on Facebook Live. Please use the link below to join me. I hope to “see” you there!

(And if you have a FB account open that first and then click on the link below; if you click on the screen once the service is in progress, it will open up a chat column where you can say hello - it's the only way we know you are there - and you can also see the many messages we are sending each other during worship.)

<https://www.facebook.com/cherokeeparkchurch/live>



From Pastor Matthias

Dear CPUC Community,
Growing up I regularly attended a Presbyterian summer camp outside of Kansas City. The sessions were up to a week long, spent variously in cabins, lodges, or A-frames. There was always horseback riding, swimming in the pool, crafts, games, Bible studies. Every evening ended with vespers.

One of the songs we would regularly sing had this line: “my spirit is willing, but my flesh is so weak.” While this lyric can be read as reflecting back the reality of the fragility of our lives and human bodies, it also continues an unhelpful dichotomy between spirit (or soul) and body. Borrowing from Greek philosophy, early Christians looked at the human body—its needs and ailments and desires—as lesser, elevating the spiritual as more important and worthy of focus.

This idea has hung around in Christianity. We see it in religious platitudes, purity culture, ableism, and the dismissal of earthly justice movements in favor of emphasizing heavenly rewards. Further, this separation is a heresy that props up white supremacy and patriarchy with a fiction of perfect detachment, objectivity, and rationality. Mind over body.

But our bodies are integral to who God made us each to be. We see this truth borne out in Jesus. He was charged with being a glutton and drunk (e.g. Matt. 11:19). He clearly enjoyed sharing meals and forming community around the table. He napped when his body needed rest (e.g. Mark 4:38). Touch was central to much of his ministry of healing (e.g. Luke 5:13).

And as we enter Holy Week at the start of April and the Easter season beyond, we remember that Jesus’ very embodiment and concern for the bodily well-being and liberation of others led to his own death. His resurrection too, then, was not just some spiritual ascension, but new life incarnate.

So even as we feel weakness, tiredness, aches or illnesses, we are called to an embodied faith that affirms the goodness of our bodies and that God’s blessings felt in our bodies—tastes, sounds, aromas, beauty and delights—are holy too.

Yours on the journey,

Pastor Matthias



At the March council meeting...

☞ Pastor Matthias reported that the GoFundMe page is up and running and has already received several donations towards the funding for religious practices for PA inmates.

☞ He thanked the congregation for his ability to spend a *week in study*, including attending the Next Church Conference, which leans younger and more progressive; the keynote speaker was Lenny Duncan who wrote "Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the US"

☞ Mike Bates, *clerk of session*, finished up his reporting required by the Presbytery; also completed sending in our quarterly contributions to the various groups we support.

☞ *Future plans for congregational gatherings during the present state of the pandemic were discussed. It is noted that decisions will be based on the latest information from the CDC and state MBH.*

♦ The possibility of *voluntary reporting* of immunization status of members was discussed as a possible way of determining when we could return to any in-person activities. The need for assurance of privacy of information is acknowledged; however, it seems that many, on zooms, are readily sharing this information. Since this information would serve in the best interests of the congregation as a whole, it was agreed that a notation would be made of those already giving out this information, and Pastor Matthias would contact any others, holding their information as private, and also asking if any help is needed to secure their immunizations.

♦ For the time being, all future church gatherings are *masked*.

♦ The Being Church *survey results* were read, with much thanks to Pastor Matthias for an easy to read synopsis of words, bar graphs, and pie charts. Answers might differ if the survey were done again today, so another is being considered for later distribution.

♦ At the next meeting the next steps for meeting at the church will be discussed, with the council leaning towards only being open to *small groups*, while masked.

♦ In-person worship will be the *very last step*.

☞ Since the *Women's Affinity and Men's Groups* have been vital to the life of the congregation for many decades, it was decided to include them under the Fellowship/Caring Ministries reports in the Annual Report, so their significance is noted. Susan offered to follow this through if help is needed. It was noted that the Fellowship/Caring Ministry is still in need of a chairperson.

☞ Possibilities for *honoring Creation Care* around Earth Day were discussed. During worship we could do a two-minute pause where we all phone in, with previously distributed scripts and phone numbers, to our congress people, on FB screen?, encouraging passage of bills to protect our earth home. Kay will brainstorm ideas for children involvement; we note that representatives have often been more responsive to children's creative contacts. Carly reports that Manley Olson, active in the Presbytery's creation care efforts, wants to nominate CPUC for the Restoring Creation Award at the national level of Presbyterians for Earth Care. Carly and Pastor Matthias will collaborate with Manley on his nomination.

Creation Care

As this newsletter was being published, plans were being made for ways our congregation to work towards further care for creation around *Earth Day, April 22*; details were not yet finalized but include contacting, as a group, our legislators and encourage them to pass laws to protect our environment. On the most local level, in our own homes, we can be aware of the impact of what we use and what we throw away into landfills. These items do not just magically go away, and many pollute and poison the earth for future inhabitants, or create fatal traps for animals.

Take a look at this scary list of how long it takes items to decompose

plastic bags - 200-1000 years
monofilament fishing line - 600 years
disposable diapers - 550 years
foamed plastic cups - 50 years
rubber boot sole - 50-80 years
leather shoes - 25-40 years
cigarette butts - 10-12 years
plywood - 1-3 years

plastic bottles - 450 years
aluminum can - 200-500 years
plastic containers - 50-80 years
tinned steel can - 50 years
cardboard - 2 months
milk cartons - 5 years

paper towel - 2-4 weeks
banana peel - 3-4 weeks
paper bag - 1 month
newspaper - 1.5 month
apple core - 2 months
cotton glove - 3 months
wool sock - 1-5 years



Note that items in the second group can all be recycled and continue their usefulness as another item, which provides business opportunities for some and jobs for many. But it only works if we are diligent. Yes, sometimes it seems it takes a lot of time to cut things apart, sort, and recycle; but the effort is worth it, and another way to combat that is to purchase prudently so there is less waste.

The third group contains items that all can be turned into compost by another agency. Some counties, including Ramsey & Dakota, have several sites where these items can be taken (and they provide free compostable plastic bags for your next load) and items will then, within six months, have been turned into compost ready for reuse in landscapes. Other counties i.e. Hennepin will pick up the organic waste from your home.

But you are the vital link...
the vital caretaker of God's gifts.

Property Management Ministry keeping us warm

Over the past winter months the heating system was re-done and fine-tuned so that in future Minnesota winters there will be no worries about old boilers and valves suddenly giving out. The Parent Room programmable thermostat was replaced with something easier to monitor and use; **you can now just turn up the heat yourself when you need it - but you must also remember to turn it back down!** And turning it down **at least 15 minutes or more** before leaving would be a gas/money-saver.

**Note that many thermostats control numbers of rooms, so you are heating more than the one room you are in.*

The general operating guidelines are below...it will soon be warm and they can be forgotten until the next heating season starts. But please see how we can function in the future, and best guard our financial outlay for heating gas.



DURING HEATING SEASON

Doors:

All doors upstairs should be closed at all times.

All doors downstairs should be left open except:

-door from Fellowship Hall to stairway leading up to Baker St entrance (close to keep heat from going up stairway)

-fire door leading to restrooms and Manomin stairway (close to keep heat from going up stairway)

***Thermostat Settings** are normally set as below; however, If you are having a gathering and need heat, just turning up the temperature to 70° will probably suffice, as bodies in the rooms will heat it up also.

--Parent Room, 55° (heats Peace Room, Kitchen, Nursery, two restrooms, Main Baker St entrance)

--Music Office, 50° (heats only that room)

--Church office, 60° (heats only that room)

--Pastor's office, to his comfort level (heats only that room)

[Programmed]

--Sanctuary, 55° (heats four big radiators in sanctuary, big radiator in basement by lift, Rainbow Room, side Baker St hall entrance, Sunday School supply room)

--Fellowship Hall, 55° (heats "baseboard" heat along south wall)

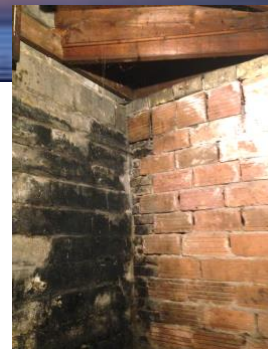
NON-HEATING SEASONS:

Doors can mostly remain open for air circulation to prevent humidity/mold build-up.

Property Management Panorama



Some of us appreciate a beautiful mountain or sea panorama; Property Management offers us a beautiful supply room (former coal bin) panorama, newly created by Curt Fleming. Previous to this it was a dark, damp, room full of dark, damp shelving and cabinets and holey dark brick walls.



April Happy Birthdays & Celebrations

06 - Okogyeamon
18 - Laura Beth
18 - Dean
19 - Tommy
❤️ 25 - Gina & Jerome

Survey Ahead! We need your feedback!

In April CPUC will send out a brief online survey to gauge people's readiness to gather at church safely, in-person, with COVID protocols in place. Your answers will help us know comfort levels as we begin our preparations for returning to our church building and a thoughtful timeline for doing so. Including your name with your answers will be optional. Folks without email will be contacted by US mail. Thank you for your honest and timely responses to the survey.

Stimulus checks



While the stimulus checks are designed to help us keep "buying" stuff, some of us, especially those of us whose paychecks or retirement checks continued as usual during the pandemic, may not need more stuff. On the other hand, the stimulus checks might be far too little to help those whose incomes were minimal even before this crisis.

A number of people donated their first checks for people such as those, and we'd like to remind everyone that those needs are still existing. Please consider donating some or all of your checks towards our Tribal Inmates fundraiser, Neighborhood House food pantry, Loaves & Fishes or other community organizations doing good work.

Channeling the late Senator Paul Wellstone, "We all do better when we all do better."



Appreciating our artworks and artists

The art piece appearing on the wall behind the sanctuary piano in February and early March was "Mears Park Magic", by our own member Maya. This angel image also appeared in our Christmas Nativity worship recording. The angel can be a reminder to recognize the many angels among us as we continue our journey through the pandemic. *In Maya's own words, "My paintings are inspired by the strength of women and community, the protection of angels, beauty, and sacredness in the natural world, and the joy of living."*

The artwork in that space on Palm Sunday, is entitled "El Sol", a mixed media work by Marina Castillo. The artist was born in Tijuana, Mexico, grew up in California and currently lives in St Paul where she works as an artist, designer and photographer. She has exhibited her art in venues across the Twin Cities, including Orchestra Hall, Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, Casa de Esperanza, Academia Cesar Chavez and more. Marina also incorporates natural healing stones in her art and is inspired by her Mexican culture. Our church held a display of her artwork in one of our past art exhibits and purchased this piece from her.



Your *Council/Session* represents you in church directions and decisions and they look forward to your questions and feedback at any time.

Pastor Matthias Peterson-Brandt: cpuc@usfamily.net, 651-227-4275

Class of 2021 (2)-denotes second consecutive 3-year term

Diane Spicer (2)

Jackie Rico

Curt Fleming

Joanne Sylvander

Class of 2022

Mike Bates (2)

Maria McNamara (2)

Tom Murphy

Jim Shatek

Class of 2023

Carly Evans (2)

Susan Strebig (2)

Kay Myhrman-Toso

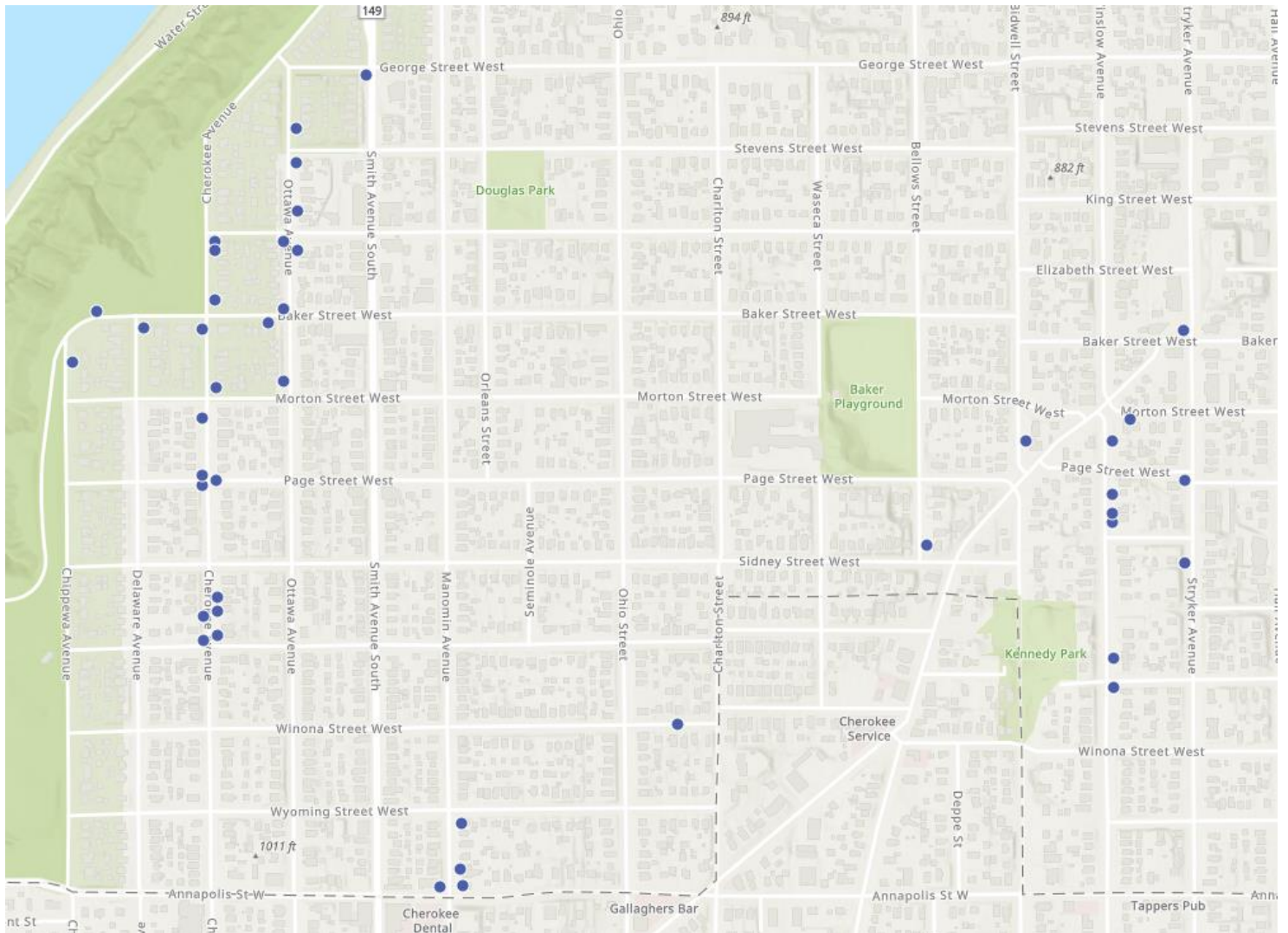
Karolyn Gilbertson



Representatives of the congregation complete the installation of Joanne as the 12th member of this year's council

Walking around the neighborhood

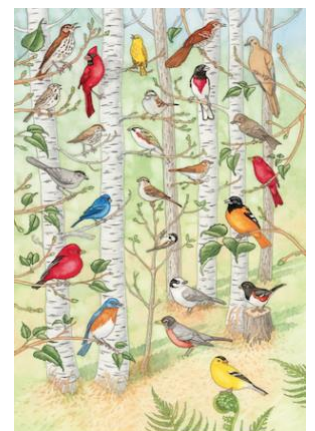
As we are still safer enjoying each other's company outside, check out the many St. Paul sidewalks containing over 1000 poems written by local citizens, and stamped into the concrete by Public Art St. Paul from 2008 and continuing this year. There are many clusters on Cherokee, Ottawa, Baker, Winslow and also Sidney east of S. Robert. You can even submit your own poem, for consideration, by April 25 to publicartstpaul.org.



Bird song

Click on the link below to find a beautiful interactive picture of Minnesota birds; then click onto any bird image and you will hear its song.

https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/mcvmagazine/bird_songs_interactive/index.html



Adult Forum

We will start to read Anne Lamott's new book, *Dusk, Night, Dawn* starting April 7. Pastor Matthias' weekly email will include Wednesdays' Zoom link and weekly chapters.

Two Kinds of People

Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you. Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. - Psalm 84:4-5

There are two kinds of people in the world: travelers and homebodies. Those who are always off in search of something new, and those who invest in their own hospitable dwelling. Innovators and nest-makers. You know who you are.

The same could be said of the Church. There are people—and whole congregations—whose gift is to create welcoming and cozy communities in which people can rest, and work, and pray. There are people—and whole congregations—whose gift is to venture out, beyond the confines of buildings and tradition, to explore new possibilities of faith.

Sometimes these two groups see themselves in opposition to one another. The homebodies scoff at the unorthodox ideas of the travelers. The innovators sneer at the nest-makers' investment in institutions. Both have been heard to say the others are not "real" Christians.

Psalm 84 settles the score. The ones who stay home to sing God's praises all day? They're blessed. The ones who call on God's strength to set out for points unknown? They're blessed too. And perhaps the two need one another.

Most travelers first heard God's call in community. And every house of the Lord was founded by someone who ventured out in faith.

There are two kinds of people in the world: those who are blessed and those who are also blessed. May the Church remember.

Vince Amlin. March 27, 2019

Vince Amlin is co-pastor of Bethany UCC and co-planter of Gilead Church Chicago.

Loaves & Fishes

CPUC next serves on Thursday, May 6. Contact Wayne. More info in next/May newsletter.

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

cpuc@usfamily.net

cherokeeparkunited.org

Newsletter articles:

submit by the 22nd of preceding month

to Susan

*The beauty of anti-racism is that you don't have to pretend to be free of racism
to be an anti-racist. Anti-racism is the commitment to fight racism
wherever you find it, including in yourself.
And it's the only way forward. Ijeoma Oluo*