



Cherokee Park 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 December 2021



Women's Affinity Group

Friday, December 3, 7 p.m.

You are invited to join our group zoom, led by Nona. Our focus is *unexpected joy in sorrow*, so if you have any experiences of that to share it would be great. Of course, there is also time for any other sharing and fellowship.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88224263749?pwd=SzBDMHRLVUpVRWE2eUgyNm5YdkpFZz09>

A *printable Advent calendar* from A Sanctified Art, is available to you. It is designed to be printed on 11 x 17 paper and if you'd like to receive a paper copy we will make some available at CPUC and you can coordinate a pick-up with Pastor Matthias. (Note that on day 2 it says to set up a stable for your nativity scene, but the figures are not added in until later days. We have to have patience! Our creche seen during worship, likewise, will show figures added each week.) This Advent resource will feature in our worship this season as well, around the theme of "Close to Home" and suggests one activity to do each day until Christmas.



Invite others to join us for Advent and Christmas worship

While COVID numbers are keeping us from in-person worship this year, consider inviting family and friends to join you for our virtual worship services. You can send them the link to below and encourage them to “attend” with you virtually. *If you are able to gather safely with other vaccinated people, consider hosting others to watch the services with you.*

There will be a Christmas Eve service on December 24 and a special Christmas Nativity worship planned on Sunday, December 26. Thank you for sharing our rich worship life with your dear ones this special season.

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

St. Paul Art Crawl comes to the West Side

Looking to support local artists? enjoy the beauty of art in a variety of media, color, and theme? Holiday shopping for loved ones? The St. Paul Arts Collective is hosting a three-day winter art sale at 88 Cesar Chavez December 3, 4, and 5. Find out more information here:

<https://stpaulartcollective.org/calendar/#!event/2021/12/1/west-side-artists>

Virtual Nativity Story

Calling all actors, artists, dancers, musicians, readers, poets, cell-phone videographers, creative, handy, and blessed people of all ages! If you would want to participate by contributing a scene, or playing/singing/sharing music, or creating art inspired by the Christmas story, writing or sharing a poem drawing on the story of Jesus' birth, let us know! We are hoping to expand the creative ways we make this story come to life. You could collaborate with another person or household. You could depict a scene with Legos or stuffed animals. Paint or puppets. Song or dance. Word or image.

Reach out to Pastor Matthias and let him know how you might want to participate. We hope to gather a full list of co-creators and assign out scenes and pieces by Dec. 1. Special thanks to the team co-inspiring this into reality: Kay, Shannon, Sophie, Jaime, and Joanne.



Advent and Christmas

As in all other areas of our lives during the pandemic, we have had to adapt our traditions to keep each other safe, but the heart of what we do remains the same. We cherish our relationships with each other and with all peoples unknown or unseen by us. Amid the confusions and disagreements in communities and our nation, we have also seen great acts of kindness, courage, and forgiveness. To celebrate all that is good, we continue and reformat, and even add to our traditions.

Be sure to join us for virtual worship each Sunday in Advent. Additional spiritual focus comes in the form of *Advent Devotions* each Wednesday at 7 p.m. (taking the place of Adult Forum for a month) led by Joanne Sylvander. Many of the *holiday greens* will still be adorning the sanctuary. You will see the usual *Advent wreath candle lighting*, but also new ways of doing that, with video inserts from our members. The *nativity story* will again be told with the involvement of our children, but using a virtual format. The *roses of remembrance* will still grace our sanctuary in honor of our departed loved ones. We will miss seeing and hugging each other, we will miss sharing food together, but know that this sacrifice is necessary so that when we come back together, we are all there.



Roses of Remembrance

It is our tradition to include a vase of roses in the sanctuary at Christmas to remember loved ones no longer with us during our holidays. This year, we will not be collecting money for Christmas roses, but we will provide a communal bouquet to symbolize the presence of all the missing loved ones dwelling in our hearts. If you have loved ones you would like listed in the bulletin, please send those names to Pastor Matthias by Saturday, December 18. If you miss this deadline you may also enter names in the chat column during the service.

From Pastor Matthias

Dear CPUC,

The season of Advent, in the liturgical year, encompasses the four Sundays leading up to Christmas. It is a time of expectant hope as we journey towards Bethlehem and the birth of Jesus, the incarnation of God's love.



This expectant hope, however, also finds a parallel meaning in our faith as we yearn for the fulfillment of God's kin-dom upon Christ's return, the making new of all creation that scriptures promise will one day come. We are not of mind, usually, to spend much time talking about the "second coming." It is a narrative that has been co-opted by the Left Behind series and turned into religious horror stories that declare salvation for some and damnation for others. Hard pass. No thank you.

But in linking the hope we experience in Advent awaiting Jesus' birth to the ultimate hope of Christ making all things new, there is a key insight for progressive Christians which helps us reclaim this idea of a second coming.

Christmas is decidedly incarnational. It wouldn't happen without a young woman giving birth to a child. This is God breaking into our world.

So too, by parallel, any understanding of what the fulfillment of God's kin-dom looks like or Jesus' return in the fullness of time cannot be detached from human embodied living. This then must include the full dignity of Black lives. This must then include reproductive rights of women. This must then include the personal autonomy of trans and enby (non-binary) folx to live their God-blessed truth. This must include full justice for the incarnate needs of all people—food, clean water, home, dignity, and room to grow and thrive.

The very coming of the Holy to dwell with us brings into harmony body and spirit, and the fulfillment of justice with the coming of the Prince of Peace. Let us journey with embodied hope and a holistic sense of the justice Jesus' coming brings.

Yours on the journey,

Pastor Matthias

At the November meeting the Council ...



- received the **pastor's report** which included new items that took up some of his time this month for FREC involvements. The council commented on the beautiful service Pastor Matthias created for Cal's memorial, with gratitude to Tom and Jim for making it possible to watch live, and then also later, on Youtube. The council also presented a surprise "gift" to Pastor Matthias encouraging him to take an extra week of personal time to compensate for the extra hours that pastors reportedly are spending (an estimate is 25% more) during the pandemic. (So this is not so much a gift as an attempt at just compensation.)

- considered reviewing the **membership rolls** but decided to postpone this (as was done last year) as we are not able to determine who is active when the pandemic has prevented so many activities in which we work and come together.

-heard a proposal by Joanne from the Adult Forum to hold a **Thanksgiving Eve zoom service** in lieu of their regular Wednesday evening meeting; it will be based on some segments of their current study book "Braiding Sweetgrass." All are invited to contribute and/or participate. Any contributions or ideas or requests should be sent to Joanne by Sunday, Nov. 21.

- received a draft suggestion from Lay Ministry regarding **changing our approach** from individual ministry teams, to a seasonal approach in which members are invited to be part of a seasonal team (of which there are four) and then each of those teams would discern how we are called to engage in various ministry areas during that given season. This might prompt new ideas and shake off some of the previous "we've always done it this way" tendencies. This is especially important during the pandemic when things all have to be done differently. Questions were raised as to how all, especially newer members, can be invited into this. Another key question is who will convene/chair each of the four seasons? Present chairs of ministries have been asked to remain through the remainder of 2021. A few ministries that would not be included in the seasonal plan are those with defined duties, i.e. Property Management, Personnel, and Finance. Next steps are for Lay Ministries Team to digest Council's feedback and share this idea with the current ministry team chairs.

-received a report from Jim that the **new janitor** is working out wonderfully, as he is very pro-active in finding areas that need attention and then asking if he can tend to those.

-received a report from Pastor Matthias that plans are underway to produce a **virtual Nativity** again this year for worship on Sunday, Dec. 26; volunteer coordinators to date are Shannon and Jaime.

2022 Council Members

Congratulations to the class of 2024 council members voted in at the congregational meeting last month - Mary A., Sebastian, Jackie, and Sandy S. They will be installed in January.

Many thanks to outgoing members, Diane, Curt, and Joanne, for their time and efforts on the council.

Other continuing members of the council are:

Class of 2022: Tom, Jim, Mike (2nd term), Maria (2)

Class of 2023: Carly (2), Susan (2), Kay, Karolyn

Annual Stewardship Campaign (and pies)

Thank you to all who have sent in their annual pledges; the Finance Committee is grateful to have figures around which they can plan a realistic budget for 2022. (And it's never too late to send yours in.) The lucky winners of the pie drawings were: Mary A. - pecan pie from Chef Jerome, Kristin - apple pie from Chef Lon, and Dave - pumpkin pie from Chef Karen.



Loaves & Fishes

Our volunteers at Loaves and Fishes helped serve 183 meals on Nov 4. The next time you will have a chance to help is January 6. We are sorry you will have to wait so long, but it will be worth it when you join our hard-working team.

December Happy

Birthdays

01 - Michele
05 - Jaime
14 - Sophie
14 - Audrey
14 - Karolyn
19 - Isaac
20 - Jerome
27 - Russ

Newsletter:

-submit articles by the 22nd of preceding month to editor - Susan, at kellystrebig@comcast.net
-proofreaders Phyllis, Mary M.
-collator Kathy B.

Your Church-During- Covid Team

Pastor Matthias
Joanne
.lill

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
<https://www.facebook.com/cherokeeparkchurch/live>
Pastor: Rev. Matthias Peterson-Brand
651-227-4275
cpuc@usfamily.net
cherokeeparkunited.org

As this is the last newsletter of 2021...

we wish to all, holy holidays
and safe transition into the new year.

