



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 January 2022

Loaves & Fishes

Thursday, January 6, 4-5:30 pm and/or 5:30-7 pm



Greetings of the season on behalf of your fellow Cherokeeans who have volunteered for service in our Loaves and Fishes missions. We have reason to be quite proud of our service over the last year. Among the public we serve, interest has increased in the L&F meals as Covid has stretched out its influence over all of our lives. We do our "shift" six times per year and have averaged around 175 meals per time. That makes well over a thousand persons helped directly by our work.

L&F, itself, serves more than a million meals throughout a year's time, so we are part of a significant movement. It is difficult to think that a million meals might be needed in our Twin Cities, but such is the rather sad state of our economic and social system.

We are striking a blow for decency with our L&F mission. Your next opportunity to join us will be on January 6. The risk of contracting Covid while serving at L&F is no greater than at most other public venues you already frequent such as grocery stores, sports events, or restaurants. Everyone is masked, and most, if not all, volunteers are vaccinated. We will need a total of 14 volunteers, 7 for the 4-5:30 pm shift and another 7 for the 5:30-7 pm shift. Let Wayne Bjorlie know by email if you can help. Thanks.

Women's Affinity Group

January 7 Friday, 7 pm

The next women's group will again be hosted by Nona and her faithful companion Biggie.

Join us for a friendly gathering of minds and hearts and special memories. You are invited to share about a gift you have received; not a material one, but some happening so wonderful or significant that the memory of it is a cherished gift, the best of gifts, a priceless gift.



Join us using the zoom link below.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88224263749?pwd=SzBDMHRLVUpVRWE2eUgvNm5YdkpFZz09>

CPUC wins the 2021 "Restoring Creation Award"

(and when we win everyone wins!)

Earlier this year, Pastor Matthias and Carly were approached by Rev. Manley Olson who is part of the Presbytery's Presbyterians for Earth Care group, asking if he could nominate CPUC for an annual Earth Care award, given CPUC's history of caring for creation in myriad ways, and particularly advocacy efforts in recent years.



Out of hundreds of Presbyterian churches and organizations that are designated as "Earth Care Congregations," CPUC was chosen for the 2021 Restoring Creation Award from the national Presbyterians for Earth Care group.

The award is given each year to a church or Presbyterian-related organization that has done exemplary environmental work. The four criteria are:

- Demonstrates sustainable practices and models them for other organizations
- Operates in a matter that is consistent with good stewardship of God's creation.
- Partners with other organizations to leverage resources for greater impact.
- Encourages continuous environmental efforts within the organization.

What an honor for CPUC to receive this award. There will be a zoom award ceremony sometime in January (details, tbd). Special thanks to Carly for frequently nudging these ideas forward, and to each of you who has been part of CPUC's many environmental efforts past and present!

Earth Care continues in our homes and lives

Last Sunday's member zoom revealed a few interesting efforts.

...Sasha attended the St. Paul outdoor European Christmas market every Friday evening and Saturday to monitor a trash recycling effort she organized; getting sellers to agree to use only compostable containers and supplies, and then enlisting volunteers to help monitor all the trash to be sure the recyclables were placed in the correct bins (and sort through the bins by hand to correct misplace items!!)

...Pastor Matthias and his brothers noted that all their gifts to each other keep arriving in the same recycled gift bags, year after year.

...Jill's nephew works for a zero-waste company!!
Westbourne.com Check it out!

Spreading a New Year with Hygge

from Sandy Waterman

I was thinking about all the ways that hygge is made possible by just little, ingenious things. HYGGE is a Danish concept that, in very recent years, has become celebrated with different how-to books, and websites that explore how to feel happy, on a shoestring, and how self-care, emotionally, is an important component of healthful living. Rather than pointing us towards a life where we seriously work hard to have more than everyone else, in terms of physical possessions, HYGGE (pronounced "HOO-guh") gently invites us to be creative about how to focus on happiness, minimize frustrations and negativity, and develop one's own ways of feeling cozy, comfortable, and focused not only on ourselves, but on the joy of others.

My ideas for CPUC hygge:

☀️ Set aside some time to read part of a book, preferably a physical book with pages to turn. The ritual of reading, even for 10 minutes at a time, takes your mind off worries, has you concentrating on something else besides work and obligations, and slows your heart rate down. Everyone has books to recommend, and my hygge books are "My Life in France" by Julia Child; "Creating a Charmed Life" by Victoria Moran; and books that discuss hygge (what it is, and what it isn't). A hygge book avoids violence, anger, and stressful topics that may induce worry, frustration, and the absence of peace in one's day. Claim peace in your reading by choosing to read narratives that inspire you, and give you a new path to happiness. If you haven't looked at spiritual books lately, try some that invigorate you. I gravitate towards books by the Dalai Lama.



☀️ Instead of waiting for the weekend to make pancakes, try getting up a little early on a weekday and enjoy the wonderful aroma of pancakes, not to mention the ritual of stirring the batter, flipping the pancakes, and enjoying them at the table with a bit of fresh fruit, syrup, and even a bit of shredded coconut. Getting up early for a fun purpose does not add stress, but lends itself to happy anticipation.

☀️ Clean out clutter, because it saps energy, wastes time and money, and makes life more difficult. Having everything in its place is not boring; it allows us to live our best life. Stop endless, frantic searches for keys, eyeglasses, and other crucial daily items by keeping them in the same place each day. Keep all like items organized together, and you will know where to find them: CDs in a drawer; safety pins in a lidded jar in a closet, etc.

☀️ Write a letter or a note to people you miss, knowing that they will be pleased to receive an envelope that does not say "Occupant" or "Resident." Feeling special to someone helps elevate your mood, and the day is better when you receive a letter or note from someone you know.

☀️ Do something nice, and unexpected, for someone who really needs it. The smiles are worth it!

☀️ I was once at a huge dog show, at the Excel Center in downtown Saint Paul. Folding chairs, although supplied in abundance, were not enough to seat the throngs of visitors. A woman, with crutches, was slowly struggling through the crowd with her husband helping her. They saw a vacant chair at the same time I did, and I rushed to it. Their faces fell, but brightened with relief as I approached them to give them the chair. "Thanks a million," the woman said. It was a pleasure for me, and I went on the search for another chair, eventually finding one.

☀️ If time permits (and, sometimes, even if it doesn't), let someone go ahead of you in line at the grocery store, or a shopping mall, or at the post office.

☀️ As I am a letter writer, I am often in the post office, especially in December, as letters and packages are making the feverish journey to their recipients. I was in a long line the other day, and when I was called to the window, I pulled out two fresh sweet bread loaves I had bought at a local bakery, plus two plastic knives. I told the clerk, "I want you guys to have some treats in your break room." The smiles and "thank you's" of the two clerks made my day! My cost: \$10.

☀️ Sit down, periodically, and enjoy the view. You might be on your front steps, on a pleasant day; gardening with the need for a short break; or chatting with a neighbor you haven't seen in a while. This gives you a sense of belonging, a sense of place, and the feeling that your day is conducive to happiness.

So many other things, not yet a part of your days, can become catalysts to hygge. You get to decide what they are. A new, pleasant toothpaste in your bathroom... Drinking hot cocoa with a dash of ground cinnamon ... Scented soaps, and essential oils, that help you breathe deeply. Every day is a gift!

Virtual Nativity Story

Out of pandemic necessity our Christmas celebration services were again offered only virtually. But we are known for making something even better out of something we first thought was less, and the second virtual nativity story-telling again unfolded, with unlikely characters, animals, imagination, chuckles, and so much heart. The virtual presentation was edited and formatted by Sophie, now a college student in Montreal.

Beginning, middle, and ending music played by Stefan, Sandy, Joanne & Jim, Jaime, Tom, Mary & Rick, Sophie (both of her!), and Jeff



Mary receives a message from a (snow) angel, Joseph sleeps on his message, John leaps in the womb of Elizabeth when Mary visits;



Beginning the journey to Bethlehem; no room at the inn, taking refuge in the animal stable;



Why is Joseph always depicted standing in the back?



A shepherd is startled while feeding his flock!



All is calm ...

From Pastor Matthias

Dear CPUC,

I recently heard about a computer game that takes 400 days to complete. You play as a solitary underground creature who has been instructed to wake the king in 400 days' time. Once you begin the game, a 400-day clock begins, moving in real time even when you are not logged into the game.



You are then left to figure out what to do to fill the time. Explore the many underground tunnels and caverns? Read? Make art? Dig new halls to add to your cozy burrow? Just sit and wait?

It is a fascinating idea for a game, and seems to invite reflections on time and solitude, meaning and habit, rest and activity, what we do and why. There is a similar question that faces each of us too: what will we do with the time we are given?

For us, how we consider this question and respond to it is shaped by our faith. There is plenty in life that can feel like drudgery, plenty of waiting. Yet, our calling is to be alive to God's Spirit in our world and in our lives, and to respond to that sacred leading.

Being rooted in a sense of call—a belief that God is still at work in our world and in us—means it is never too late to be transformed by grace (either receiving it or extending it), it is never too late to know love, never too late to strive for justice. Some like to make resolutions for the start of the New Year. I have done so myself some years. Whether you choose to do so or not, I would encourage you, here at the threshold of a New Year, to reflect a little. Here are a couple questions you might use:

- Where did I encounter God in this past year?
- To what am I being called in the year ahead?

However you respond to these questions, I look forward to seeing what God might work in and through us in the year ahead.

Yours on the journey,
Pastor Matthias

At the December meeting the Council ...

-received the clerk's report including that the per capita requested from the Presbytery is 36.50 per member and from the UCC is \$10/member so our tradition is to split the collection between the two and send \$23.25/member to each. The statistical report needed will be approved at the January meeting. Glen and Barb Herrington Hall have requested to return as members at CPUC.



-received the Pastor's report; the greater time emphasis was on preparing for Advent and Christmas Eve and Christmas Nativity services.

-proposed and approved the annual congregational meeting for Sunday, January 30th to receive and approve the annual report and 2022 budget, approve the Pastor's Terms of Call. The Personnel Committee is in charge of recommending any cost of living adjustments or raises. In collaboration with Pastor Matthias, Personnel Committee approved an end of year bonus for employees.

-discussed questions from the Being Church During Covid Team including how we are guarding the members' emotional and spiritual health as well as physical health. Numbers of people feel they do not get anything through the virtual offerings and want to be back in the building. Since we accomplished diligent efforts last summer when we did hybrid services, is there any sense that we could entertain doing so again, with the same efforts of distancing, masking, no singing, no socialization/refreshments and perhaps additional precautions such as HEPA air filters and/or requiring vaccination for those able to get it? Especially knowing that most of our members are vaccinated. It looks like the pandemic could continue throughout the next full year, or more - can the church survive this without allowing some in-person interaction? A plan would be to do what we did last July and offering a webcast as well as in-person so people can decide what their comfort level is and still be involved. Can we not "sit and wait until it is safe" but learn how to be safe no matter what condition we find ourselves in? We will think and pray on this and discuss again at the next meeting.

-received ministry reports. Seeds of Resistance is organizing Christmas gifts and monetary support for a family that cannot be served by any other agencies, Property Management reports a new motor is installed and working in one of the two boilers, Pastor and two members met with our insurance agent to go over the 2022 policy, Lay Ministry met with chairpeople and may need an interim plan before going forward with the extensive plan proposed last month.

-thanked Curt, Diane, and Joanne for their faithful service on the council this past term.

-noted future dates: elders will be ordained/installed Sunday, January 9, 2022.

2022 Council Members

Class of 2022: Mike Bates (2nd term), Maria McNamara (2), Tom Murphy, Jim Shatek
Class of 2023: Carly Evans (2), Karolyn Gilbertson, Kay Myhrman-Toso, Susan Strebig (2)
Class of 2024: Mary Anderson, Sebastian Ellefson, Jackie Rico (2), Sandy Settevig

January Happy Birthdays

05 - Sandy
05 - Bjorn
08 - Sandy W.
12 - Bob
❤️ 31 - Russ & Sandy

Your Church-During-Covid Team

Pastor Matthias
Joanne
Jill
Maria

Newsletter:

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



After worship on Sundays, **zoom link** - active from after worship to 12 noonish.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85651173608?pwd=SUh6NmVOUnNhM0xxRGNrekpvVFZ0Zz09>

For those accessing by phone - Meeting ID: 856 5117 3608 Passcode: 620169

Christmas Worship



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-Brandt
651-227-4275
cpuc@usfamily.net
cherokeeparkunited.org

The Unfinished Task of Christmas

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone
when the kings and princes are home ...
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner ...
to bring peace among the people,
to make music in the heart.

Howard Thurman