



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 July 2022

Loaves and Fishes

July 7, Thursday

Again, folks will need us to help with Loaves and Fishes. Once summer comes, it seems that we should be able to take a break from all of our routine duties, but this duty is one that does not depend on the weather.

Folks still need to eat

and more so now when they need even more money to do it. Everyone is masked, and most, if not all, volunteers are vaccinated. We will need a total of 14 volunteers, 7 for the 3:30-5:30 pm shift and another 7 for the 5:00-7 pm shift.

So, please consider helping and let Wayne know if we can count on you.

PRIDE Celebration 2022

July 9, Saturday

You are invited to join us in representing CPUC at West St. Paul Pride Day at the West St. Paul Sports Center at 1655

Livingston Ave. (on Wentworth, one block west of Robert St.). **We need your help to represent CPUC at our table that day!** If you are available, please contact Pastor Matthias or Jill Jackson OR sign up at church! Plan to come for an hour or two to meet the rainbow of people celebrating PRIDE together



PS— Check out this month's issue of Lavender Magazine, the Twin Cities' LGBTQ+ magazine. Rev. Dr. DeWayne Davis of Plymouth Congregational is honored as one of the Pride Month honorees. Plus there are lots of other interesting features about LGBTQ+ history and community in the Cities.

<https://lavendermagazine.com/our-lives/lavender-community-award-winner-individual-reverend-doctor-dewayne-davis%ef%bf%bc/>



Worship in the Park

July 17, Sunday, 10:15 a.m.

Join us for worship in nature, just a few blocks west at the main pavilion in Cherokee Regional Park. Pavilion tables are available for seating, but you are also invited to bring lawn chairs if you want. We'll have a potluck style lunch afterward. (More details on that tbd.)

At the June meeting the Council ...



--received the pastor's report including information that he has taken the pastoral boundary training required every three years on how to maintain healthy boundaries. He also would like to apply to attend the inaugural cohort for Leadership for Social Justice meeting two Fridays per month in Sept-May; Maria will write the congregational letter supporting his inclusion in this. He also attended a website training with Mike and Tom, given by Winnie.

--received a report from the Lay Ministries Team: Karolyn has put together a visual presentation on the new seasonally organized Ministry Garden concept to put on an easel at church. There will be a special focus on engaging new people, on giving a reprieve to those who might be getting tired, on encouraging us to try something new. This model will also hopefully lend itself more easily to a focus on our congregational mission and vision. There should be an ease of comfort, in that commitments will only be a season, not a full year.

--passed a motion from the Lay Ministries Team proposal to begin a trial of a Seasonal Ministry Team model in the Fall of 2022, with the first Seasonal Team ministering during the October-December "Harvest" season. The people called to serve on this first Seasonal Team will start gathering in August.

--passed a motion to approve the use of our building as a meeting place for Recovery Dharma to host a weekly meeting at CPUC. Recovery Dharma is a recovery group based on Buddhist principles such as the Four Noble Truths and the 8-fold path. Interestingly this is a request from someone who had been worshiping with us online, from Baltimore, and she moved here and felt we were a safe and welcoming site for all. Pastor Matthias and Jim will meet with leaders of the group to confirm an agreement for their use of the space. Our building continues to host a meeting of the Minnesota Transgender Alliance, a transgender support group which meets every other Friday, and by the St. Paul Mennonite Fellowship weekly. The council affirms that our building is a blessing that should be shared and made available in support of groups who promote peace and equality; this is good stewardship of this resource.

--spent time as a mid-year check-in, sharing thoughts on how we see ourselves as a congregation living out our mission (statement) now, and in the future.

(There will be no council meeting in July.)

Dear CPUC,

In her 2018 book *Trust Women: A Progressive Christian Argument for Reproductive Justice*, Rebecca Todd Peters (a Presbyterian pastor) identifies that one of the tactics for anti-abortion Christians is to flatten the many complexities that factor into a person's decision on whether or not to seek an abortion or not.



By declaring only a small set of acceptable circumstances under which an abortion is an okay choice, anti-abortion advocates attempt to make the terms of debate one in which pregnant people must justify their choice. Opposed to this premise is, instead, operating from a default position of trusting women (& non-binary/trans folks) to make their own reproductive healthcare decisions, taking into account all relevant information, factors, and circumstances.

This approach of ironing out all wrinkles and folds from moral decision is one that is all too common in some strains of Christianity. To offer a couple other examples:

- Racism is reduced to individual prejudice and actions, which makes it easy to blame “bad apples” or deny the widespread existence of racism **VS.** racism that exists in systems and structures, which makes it much more complicated to address.
- Sex is only acceptable in heterosexual marriages, which makes it very clear-cut **VS.** the wide diversity of healthy human sexual expression, in which there is necessarily room for ambiguity, and moral discernment because no one size can fit all people or relationships.
- The only religious truth is a narrow theological understanding of Jesus Christ as the Son of God who is the only path to salvation **VS.** the Sacred's divine freedom to show up in any time, any place, any people, offering wisdom, wonder, and love (never mind too the diversity of theologies within Christianity itself).

There is an easiness to foregoing complexity, preferring perspectives that make judgment simpler. However, I believe that God endowed humanity with minds to question, and wonder, and reason, and change. Though choosing this path will mean feeling the pinch of tough decisions, the occasional discomfort of uncertainty, it is a path that opens to us a richer, more vibrantly colorful picture of creation and who God is.

Stay curious. Stay hopeful.

Yours on the path of Jesus,
Pastor Matthias

Thanks for the Spring cleanups trimups June 18 & 25



Lynne says Mike got lost in the weeds somewhere



Sebastian & Sarah brought along Rita's and Isaac's little hands and hearts to make work fun



Jim, Diane, power tools, ladder always a good combo



Karen always quietly does her job and does more work than anyone else



Curt vs. weeds



some of us get flushed and tire more easily... first to leave!



Jackie, Philip, Curt, holy grounds conference with Diane



power tools are Diane's specialty...get out of her way!!



Self-seeded milkweed challenges our landscape plan and also sidewalk walkers. However we left many to their own pattern for our friends, the Monarchs.



Jeff is our earth-friendly version of Weed-Be-Gone

Greeters needed at CPUC!

There are many opportunities to greet at church in July! Greeters can be in-person or virtual (for Facebook Livestream worshipers). If you are available and willing to help, please sign up using the Sign-Up Genius link below.

There may be services in the future where greeters are not present at church or online. We ask your cooperation and extra attentiveness to fellow worshipers on those occasions. If you have questions or would like more information about greeting, contact Jill Jackson. Thank you!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C45AFA72AA1FFC16-worship>

Free stuff

Our church office was cleaned up six years ago; many "like" items were consolidated, but there are a few categories that seem to be not needed. If you would like some 3-ring binders there are about 20 available on the third shelf, left cabinet in the church office; and there are also file folders, some slightly used, and post-it notes in a bag on the floor. Help yourself or ask Susan if you would like help.



LOVE SENT BEHIND BARS - WE ARE ALL CRIMINALS

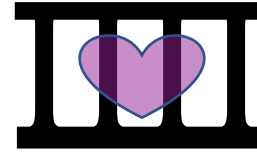
(from Susan)

--living out our vision of

Fierce Justice,

Radical Love,

Abundant Grace.



Our year-old acquaintance with Marvin Running River Banks, a young black Indian man incarcerated at Benner SCI in Pennsylvania, has opened our eyes. It has opened them not only to his personal story, but to others in cells next to him, to his other friends and relatives in other PA jails, and now on to people incarcerated in Minnesota. To quote Nona's father, who has a law degree from Notre Dame, legal does not necessarily mean just, and just does not necessarily mean legal.

Some efforts through our church family are focused on emotional support through concern and letters, and other efforts seek to find justice for inmates, if only the justice deserved even while they are incarcerated. Through our efforts, a few more people, many unjustly arrested, almost all raised in poverty, a vast majority being non-white-appearing people, know, that we know, that they are there.

We Are All Criminals?

As a white person, I don't worry about if some police officer stops me for jay-walking, or looking "suspicious" as I linger while shopping, or if I am trying to unsuccessfully unlock my car; when I was stopped for speeding I did not worry that I would be taken into a squad car, my car searched, or me being taken to a jail.

If I would be taken to a jail, I would not worry that I could not find someone to pay my fine so I would not have to stay in jail for weeks or years waiting for a court date; and then would not have to worry about losing my job; and then not have to worry about not paying my rent; and then not worry about my family being evicted.

The list goes on and on and on. The concept of "unjustly incarcerated" and then the devastating ramifications, is a topic explored by Emily Baxter, who received degrees from the U of MN and St. Thomas School of Law. Please allow the Spirit to lead you to watch Emily's video, ***We Are All Criminals***. (google - we are all criminals). She has also written a book by that name.

13th Amendment still allows for slavery to this day

The *Juneteenth* celebration (a federal holiday since June 2021) commemorates the news of the Emancipation proclamation finally reaching and being enforced in Texas on June 19, 1865; but this was 2 1/2 years AFTER the proclamation was made by Lincoln. Hundreds of thousands of people working as slaves were "freed". Six months later, the 13th Amendment was ratified, which abolished slavery in the form of one person owning another as property, BUT, allows slavery "as punishment for crime."

Those words allow incarcerated people to be used as free and even forced labor after slavery was formally abolished, and they **STILL ENABLE FREE AND CHEAP PRISON LABOR** to be exploited to this day.

Pennsylvania prisons, including Benner SCI where Running River is incarcerated, pays employed prisoners 19¢ / hour, with some "choice" jobs paying 50 ¢ / hour. Many inmates have no family to help them, but they need money as they are charged for any visit to the infirmary or for any drugs - a minimum of \$5.00, even for aspirin. They also need money to supplement or replace their meals as the food is often rotten-smelling, moldy, and food poisoning is not uncommon. People in jails/prisons are mostly those from the lowest economic levels, and disproportionately non-white people. The justice system is in no way, just.





Liturgy notes

Rev. Glen presides

Mrs. Rev. ministers as liturgist and bubble blower

So great to have children back in worship



THANK YOU...

to Mary B. for auditing our 2021 financial records.
She zoomed her report to the congregational meeting!



July Birthdays & Celebrations

♥ 07 - Valerie & Matthias
12 - Carly
14 - Tom
♥ 20 - Joy and Lon
21 - Kristin
26 - Sebastian
28 - Dave
29 - Meliza

Newsletter

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



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

Adult Forum – Summer Hiatus

The Adult Forum is on hiatus for the summer. As the weather and daylight allows for more time outdoors and folks begin to travel, we will take a break from meeting weekly. We may figure out some opportunities to gather periodically over the summer.

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., in person and online
<https://www.facebook.com/cherokeeparkchurch/live>
Pastor: Rev. Matthias Peterson-Brandt
651-227-4275
cpuc@usfamily.net
cherokeeparkunited.org

THOUGHTS & PRAYERS
POLICY & CHANGE