



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

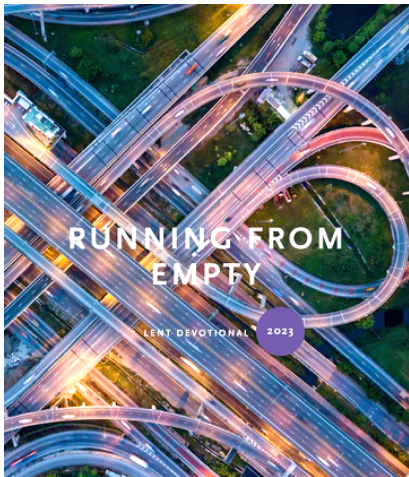
Newsletter March 2023

Loaves and Fishes

(referencing back to the February 19 readings and sermon)

The Loaves and Fishes meal serving of **Thursday, March 2**, will be no miracle. At the outset, we can expect there will be enough for all who come. We who will serve will know that no miraculous power but we, will be responsible to ensure that all who come are fed. Yet, for some of them, perhaps, it will be another minor miracle for which to give thanks.

Please email Wayne Bjorlie with your offer to help on Thursday the 2nd. Thank you.



Lenten Daily Devotionals

We have a few Lenten daily devotionals available for those who might want one. They are titled "Running from Empty" and are created by the UCC and pilgrim press. Thanks to Glen for seeking these out and ordering them. Please speak to or email Pastor Matthias if you are interested in a copy.

Inquiry Class

A small group is forming for people who are interested in learning more about CPUC and/or considering officially joining Cherokee Park United Church. These inquirers' classes will gather to share about our own stories and explore who CPUC is as a congregation. We will have this conversation over the course of two gatherings, Sundays March 19 & 26 at 9 a.m. (before worship). These inquirers' classes are open to anyone who is interested in learning more about CPUC as a congregation and interested in knowing more about membership.



For questions or if interested, please reach out to Pastor Matthias.

651-227-4275 cpuc@usfamily.net

Sermon-inspired metaphor

Member Eric J. shares that in the story of dishonest tax collector Zacchaeus, the tree, to him, became a metaphor for white privilege, and he needs to get down out of that tree himself, and down to sacred ground. This also coincides with the indigenous belief that the ground of mother earth is sacred, and we will do well to walk barefoot and carefully, to care for the smallest and seemingly less significant parts of creation, all needed for the earth's survival. And for the survival of humanity itself.

The first part of reparations – truth telling

The past is not just in the past

For those of us yankees who have lived mostly in the North or Midwest, racism may have not been as apparent, especially not the degrading, outward, day to day and violent expressions of it.

We can be more awakened to the reality and reasons for racism imbedded in our culture, even if it is uncomfortable to see it. A moving display at the Hennepin County Minneapolis Central Library is available through March 29. This is Diane and Justice Alan Page's personal "Testify Exhibit". In addition, the display will host "Testify Tuesdays," from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. which will discuss topics like voting rights, criminal justice, and education reform.

In spite of slavery being abolished, another type of slavery continued under "Jim Crow" laws which severely restricted activities of black people. It barred them from congregating, or owning weapons or getting bank loans or shopping or attending schools, etc., except those places designated for black people. And it allowed the law to overlook much violence and killings of non-whites by the general white public.

That resulted in perpetuating the poverty of a disproportionate group of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color). An article in Soujourner's magazine reveals that "Two years of living through a pandemic has exposed extreme inequalities of income and wealth – and in some cases dictates who lives and who dies. Wealth and power have become more concentrated in the hands of fewer people. **While millions lost their lives and livelihoods, roughly 700 U.S. billionaires saw their combined wealth increase by \$2.2 trillion.** This is in part thanks to 'agents of inequality'—the veritable professional army of accountants, tax lawyers, wealth managers, and family office staffers that facilitates the global hiding and sequestering of wealth. " There is no ability for many people to pull themselves up - we need to help make this happen.





Clarice Phelps – racism living on

(Photo: Clarice Phelps works in 2012 to purify the element berkelium as fellow scientist Shelley VanCleve observes at Oak Ridge National Lab in Tennessee)

As a kid, Clarice Phelps often turned to one image for inspiration. While other seventh graders hung '90s pop band and movie posters on their walls, Phelps put up a poster of Mae

Jemison, the first Black female astronaut to launch into space. “Mae started it all for me,” said Phelps, who in learning about Jemison realized she – a Black girl from Nashville’s Edgehill public housing – could reach for big dreams, too.

Because of her race, her gender or her family’s income, Phelps would face bias at almost every step, she said, on her way to helping make a discovery that would change how scientists chart the building blocks of the universe.

An “unlikely scientist,” Phelps had few scientific influences beyond a stack of home encyclopedias and “Beakman’s World” on TV. And growing up poor with three sisters and a single mom, advanced – and expensive – schooling didn’t seem likely. But Phelps was a smart kid with a passion for learning and was also highly determined.

Once, after a childhood music teacher sneered at her pawn shop-bought violin, Phelps devoted hours of practice to earn first chair in the orchestra, she said in a 2019 TEDx Talk. “I poured my heart and soul into that violin because I saw it as an extension of who I wanted to be,” she said. “I took everything in my life like that violin,” she said, refusing to let others’ assumptions limit what she might achieve.

Phelps later was selected into a magnet school, where she met two teachers who, she said, were “instrumental” in nurturing her passion for science, prompting her to pursue a bachelor’s degree in chemistry at Tennessee State University and later enlist in the US Navy’s Nuclear Power School.

Their stories aren’t widely told, but these Black women and men helped shape history.

When Phelps turned her sights to radiochemistry – racial bias and sexism tried to get in her way. While women make up half the US workforce, only 2% of Black women work in science, technology, engineering and math. As the only Black woman in the whole facility, co-workers initially thought she was the janitor, with requests to grab the trash. She also served as an engineering laboratory technician aboard the USS Ronald Reagan, (cont pg 5)

(continued) and in 2010, joined an international mission to create Element 117, purifying berkelium and bombarding it for months with calcium, which four years later, named "tennessine (Ts)" was officially recognized the element, as part of the periodic table.

Ts is the second-heaviest known element on Earth, and scientists believe it is a critical stepping stone toward the creation of future superheavy elements. With the discovery, the girl with the Jemison poster on her wall had "claimed a seat at the periodic table," Phelps said in her TEDx Talk. But despite the feat, she again found herself fighting for recognition.

When her lab celebrated tennessine, Phelps was left off the gala's guest list; when her supervisor got her in, no place card bore her name, she said. Even the plaque listing scientists involved in the discovery omitted her. "They had left me off this whole thing," Phelps said. "I felt embarrassed because everyone is wandering around this luncheon, and I literally didn't have a seat at the table. I went outside, and I was crying." Phelps later was told her name had been cut off by mistake following a spreadsheet's line break, she said. Phelps' "name was inadvertently omitted from a plaque dedicated to (Oak Ridge National Laboratory) staff credited with the discovery of tennessine, an error we quickly corrected," the institution told CNN. At the time, though, the incident – like the doubting orchestra teacher – served again to harden Phelps' resolve. After winning the months-long battle to get the plaque recommissioned with her name on it, Phelps started talking with reporters about the significance of tennessine and her role on the team.

Do prisons do more harm than good? What other options can we create?

If you want to know more about the reality of prison life and why so many organizations have been formed to educate and promote legislative reform (but so far not being supported enough by the public to make a big impact), check out **The Marshall Project**. This is an easy to watch online report on actual prison reality. This is definitely a **topic of reparations** as it affects black, indigenous, people of color in much greater percentages than others. This system perpetuates the down-push of BIPOC people.



One quote you will find is "People who say you have everything you need to survive on the inside, are full of bullshit." Another most chilling and alarming quote is that "The guard who is the last person you see at prison who is letting you out after serving your sentence always says 'See you soon. Or see you in a few months. They know you do not have any resources or training in prison to help you to become a functioning citizen. Prisons are big business; they want to be full. (when checking out the website below, be sure to scroll down)

<https://www.themarshallproject.org/inside-story>

From Pastor Matthias

Dear CPUC,

There have always been people of faith whose resistance to injustice and evil in the world is both inspirational and seems impossibly good in its achievement.

John Woolman was a Quaker businessman in the 1700s in the pre-Independence colonies of the United States. In his journal he recounts the formative experience of being a kid and out of curiosity trying to hit a bird's nest with a stone. One of his throws hit and killed the mother bird. Horrified by his own actions, he committed to protecting all life with the rest of his days.



He became a staunch abolitionist, traveling all over and preaching anti-slavery messages in the Quaker meeting houses he would visit. When he would stay as the guest of someone who owned slaves, Woolman would pay the slaves for their service, even as he would attempt to (and sometimes succeed) convince the slave owners to set free the people they had captive. He refused to use silver cutlery or dishes as he believed that silver was harvested under brutal and inhumane conditions.

Woolman's sense of preserving life extended to the animal kingdom as well. He was a vegetarian out of his sense of opposition to the cruelty of animals, and he refused to ride in stage coaches because he believed that the horses who pulled them were treated too harshly.

Like I said, both inspiring and setting a bar for goodness that seems impossible for anyone else to live up to.

At the root of Woolman's choices and conviction, however, were his quiet consistency in seeking to listen to the Spirit of Christ. He made a practice of listening for God's call both in the world and in his own life, then heeded the call of God as he understood it.

While the results of this practice in Woolman's life seem superhuman, the practice offers itself to each of us, whatever our circumstances. Each of us can listen for the Spirit of God and each of us can do somethings—no matter how small it feels—to further God's goodness in the world.

Yours on the journey,
Pastor Matthias

At the February Meeting the Council...



--received a report from Sara Gleason of **FREC** - Facilitating Racial Equity Collaborative (* see page 11 for "What is FREC?") and voted to **renew our contract** acting as fiscal agent for the coming year. Legally FREC is a program of CPUC and does not stand alone. Our congregational insurance policy covers FREC events and it also maintains a very large treasury balance to cover any emergencies.

--received and approved the pastor's report; in addition to the usual occurring monthly events, major time was spent attending workshops and educational opportunities, many aimed at preparing for a congregational **Reparations focus** during Lent.

--received the clerk's report, including the **statistical report** to be given to the Presbytery. This report only counts one half of our members as the other half is considered as the UCC portion of the congregation for reporting and financial obligations. The Council is reminded that Mike is willing to **continue one more year as clerk** but the congregation should be looking for someone willing to shadow him to be ready to continue next year in this role.

--received an invitation from Pastor Matthias for (two) council members to accompany an **inquirer's class** which is being formed, for any people interested in looking further into joining Cherokee Park United Church. Barb and Tom volunteered. Tentatively this may be two Sundays in late March before worship. Kay has offered to provide child care. It was suggested that we also offer this online somehow to extend the invitation to those living outstate or out of state who regularly join us for worship via Facebook or zoom.

--received an update from Pastor Matthias on the efforts to facilitate the **building of a sweat lodge** for indigenous inmates at the Benner PA state prison. Our congregation is involved as it consented to be the holder of funds donated by the inmates after winning a law suit directing that the prison needed to allow this religious accommodation. The funding and building of the lodge is entirely up to the inmates and volunteers will be needed to help build it.

--received a report from Property Management that the **lift door** is repaired and door keys are now available to use in case of emergency.

--received a report from Lay Ministry that the next **SST for the "Awakening" season** is formed; members are Kay, Maria, Carly, Karen, and Jackie, with Jill and Diane from the Lay Ministries team guiding.

Thank you to the Awakening Seasonal Steering Team

The team for the next season (encompassing April-May-June) is now formed and underway. Thank you to this group, consisting of Kay, Maria, Carly, Karen, and Jackie, with Jill and Diane from the Lay Ministries team guiding.

The Seasonal Steering Team provides leadership in the ministries of fellowship, caring, outreach, worship, justice, and faith life.

This new experiment in ministry model paves the way for all kinds of ideas and creativity. If there is something you have a passion for, or would like to try, this is the time. This can be just a one-time activity or an effort that lasts longer. Last season one member's passion was to be sure that there were other food group alternatives along with our every-lasting Panera bakery goods each Sunday.

Please contact any on the team if you can help in any way, especially in an area that gives you the most satisfaction and uses your gifts.



Newsletter

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

March birthdays & celebrations

- 08 - Valerie
- 09 - Jim
- 20 - Gabriel
- 21 - Philip
- 23 - Sarah
- ♥ 24 - Dean and Meliza
- 31 - Sandy

News of our young adults

We all miss the presence of our young adults as they grow up and move away for new jobs or educational experiences. Jaime was recently featured in a college newsletter with advice to prospective transfer students.

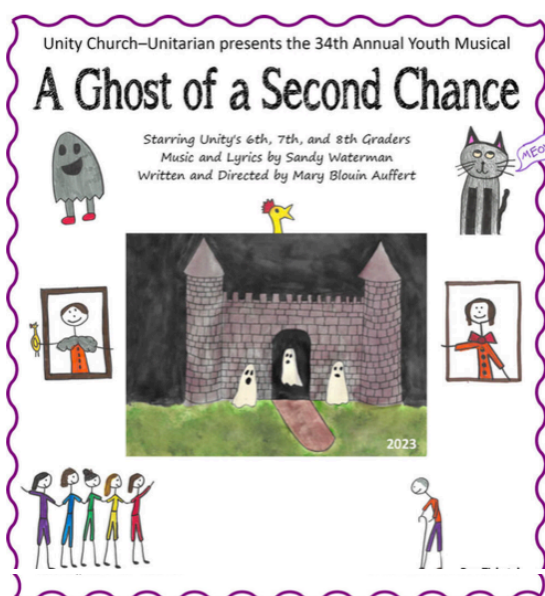
(from Minnesota Private College Council February 2023 newsletter)



Jaime came from a community college where she completed some general coursework to save some money, but she always knew transferring was part of her plan to pursue math education. "I reached out to Concordia's transfer staff eight months before I transferred to make sure all my courses would transfer. They made the process very easy and were very helpful along the way."

Many colleges and universities offer a transfer orientation, which is usually optional. Jaime recommends attending the optional transfer orientation offered. "Once on campus, even just the first week, take advantage of the transfer orientation if offered. It helped me get into the groove of the school and meet other new transfer students."

She also encouraged students to reach out to faculty. "Take advantage of their office hours or talking with them before or after class. All these things will help you get comfortable on campus." Because transfer students dive into the courses for a major right away, reaching out to faculty helps students connect to opportunities such as department scholarships, internships and research.



34th Annual Youth Musical

March 9, 10, and 11, 2023 at Unity Unitarian Church

CPUC's music director, Sandy Waterman, has written six original songs for this year's youth musical, created by playwright Mary Blouin Auffert. A group of children explore a haunted castle, and encounter ghosts who eventually become their friends, plus two odd, historic characters who are ensconced in picture frames, and a rich, lonely kid who's been snubbed by his friends ... and he doesn't know why. The story, entitled, "A Ghost of a Second Chance," stars thirteen 12-, 13-, and 14-year-olds. This year's show themes are communication and forgiveness. www.unityunitarian.org

March – Women's History Month

Having worked for **women's rights** for forty years, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Matilda Joselyn Gage became increasingly frustrated with their inability to make major gains by the 1880's. In their disappointment, they looked **beyond the Euro-American culture** and gained a vision of a **world of equality** from their nearby neighbors, the **Haudenosaunee***, the six nations of the Iroquois Confederacy: the Onondaga, Mohawk, Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida and Tuscarora who had social, religious, economic, and political positions far superior to their own.



The Confederacy had, and still has today, a family/governmental structure based on female authority. Haudenosaunee women controlled the economy in their nations through their responsibilities for growing and distributing the food. They had the final authority over land transfers and decisions about engaging in war. Children came through the mother's line, not the father's, and if the parents separated, the children stayed with their mother, and if she died, with her clan family. Women controlled their own property and belongings, as did the children. Political power was shared equally among everyone in the Nation, with decisions made by consensus in this pure democracy, the oldest continuing one in the world.

Still today, the chief and clan mother share leadership responsibilities. The clan mother chooses and advises the chief, placing and holding him in office. These men, appointed by the women, carry out the business of government. The clan mother also has the responsibility of removing a chief who doesn't listen to the people and make good decisions, giving due consideration to seven generations in the future. To be chosen as a chief, the man cannot be a warrior (since it is a confederacy based on peace), nor can he have ever stolen anything or abused a woman. Women live free of fearing violence from men. The spiritual belief in the sacredness of women and the earth—the mutual creators of life—make rape or beating almost unthinkable.

Native Nation women have had political voice on this land since the founding of the Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) confederacy over 1000 years ago. Just as our suffrage foremothers before us, non-native women have much to learn from Native women and their centuries of experience. *(Excerpts from an article originally published by the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission (WSCC) on April 17, 2020)*

**Some of you may recognize the nation name "Haudenosaunee" as the source of the Thanksgiving prayer service led by Joanne Sylvander back in our Covid Zoom days.*

What is FREC?

The Facilitating Racial Equity Collaborative was born out of CPUC's anti-racism work alongside the Anti-Racism Study and Dialogue Circles (ASDIC). An initial two-day anti-racism training in 2008 gave way to FREC and the annual Overcoming Racism Conference. 2023 will mark the 15th Overcoming Racism Conference! Meanwhile, FREC's work has expanded beyond the Twin Cities Metro to bring anti-racism leadership training to out state areas of Minnesota.

Cherokee Park United Church remains the fiscal agent for FREC. While FREC has its own steering team and a distinct budget and bank account from the main CPUC ones, CPUC is the legal entity that underwrites FREC. As such, we review and approve an agreement annual between the FREC steering team and CPUC. The granular details of the agreement are not exciting, but they do provide us with a shared understanding of responsibilities and the scope of FREC's work. As the fiscal agent, CPUC receives, deposits, and tracks funds designated for FREC. We also sign contracts with speakers, venues, caterers, and event coordinators which are reviewed by the FREC steering team and CPUC. In return for our fiscal agency, FREC gives CPUC a fiscal agent fee and we are credited with an in-kind donation as well as listed as a sponsor of the Overcoming Racism Conference.

At our February meeting, the church Council voted to renew our agreement with FREC for 2023. The work of building an anti-racist world aligns with CPUC's understanding of Jesus' calling, and it is work that is grown and sustained year over year.



Recycle your plastic take-out containers here!

We are in need of the larger meal-sized covered take-out containers or baked goods containers (as they are usually taller to accommodate those puffy pastries) to use on Sundays for people interested in taking any left-over sweets. Please bring your clean containers and just leave in the kitchen on center table. And if you take home sweets, bring them back again and again! Sasha will be so pleased!

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 and in person
<https://www.facebook.com/cherokeeparkchurch/live>
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