



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 May 2023



Volunteering for **Loaves and Fishes** not only provides free labor to help those who need the food, but also provides food for the spirits of those who volunteer. We will meet again at St Matthews on

Thursday, May 4, for this important mission of Cherokee Park Church. The first shift starts about 3:30 to prepare and the second shift about 5:00 to serve and clean up.

We will be a little short of veteran volunteers again this time due to travel out of town, so we need a few new volunteers. Please email Wayne to volunteer.

Be a part of the

We Care for Our Earth Spring Celebration!!!

Sunday, May 21 after Worship and Fellowship at CPUC



The **Awakening Seasonal Steering Team** is hosting an event for all ages to celebrate the ways we care for our earth and each other through our daily actions and choices. Come prepared for springtime fun and to do some **neighborhood clean-up**. All are invited to enjoy earth-friendly snacks at fellowship. A **phone photo scavenger** hunt is planned to find the life-giving gifts of our earthly home and ways to help our planet thrive for all. Bags and gloves will be provided for those who choose to participate in the clean-up action. Connect with Kay, Jackie, Karen or Jill if you have comments or questions. Please join us!



Spring Tidy-Up Saturday June 3

Plan to drop in Saturday morning to help tidy up the landscape around church. We will have left the insects and pollinators rest through May, so now human desires for neatness can be considered! The contact person is Diane. [Rain date June 10.]

55th Anniversary Celebration Sunday June 4

After worship we will have special cake and ice cream refreshments to top off a sweet celebration of being together as this dynamic and loving little church that does big things.

Sign up for the Growing Seasonal Steering Team!

The next season in our Garden Ministry is “Growing.” This covers the months of **July, August, and September**. The Seasonal Steering Team will share their leadership with the congregation in the ministries of fellowship, caring, outreach, worship, justice, and faith life.

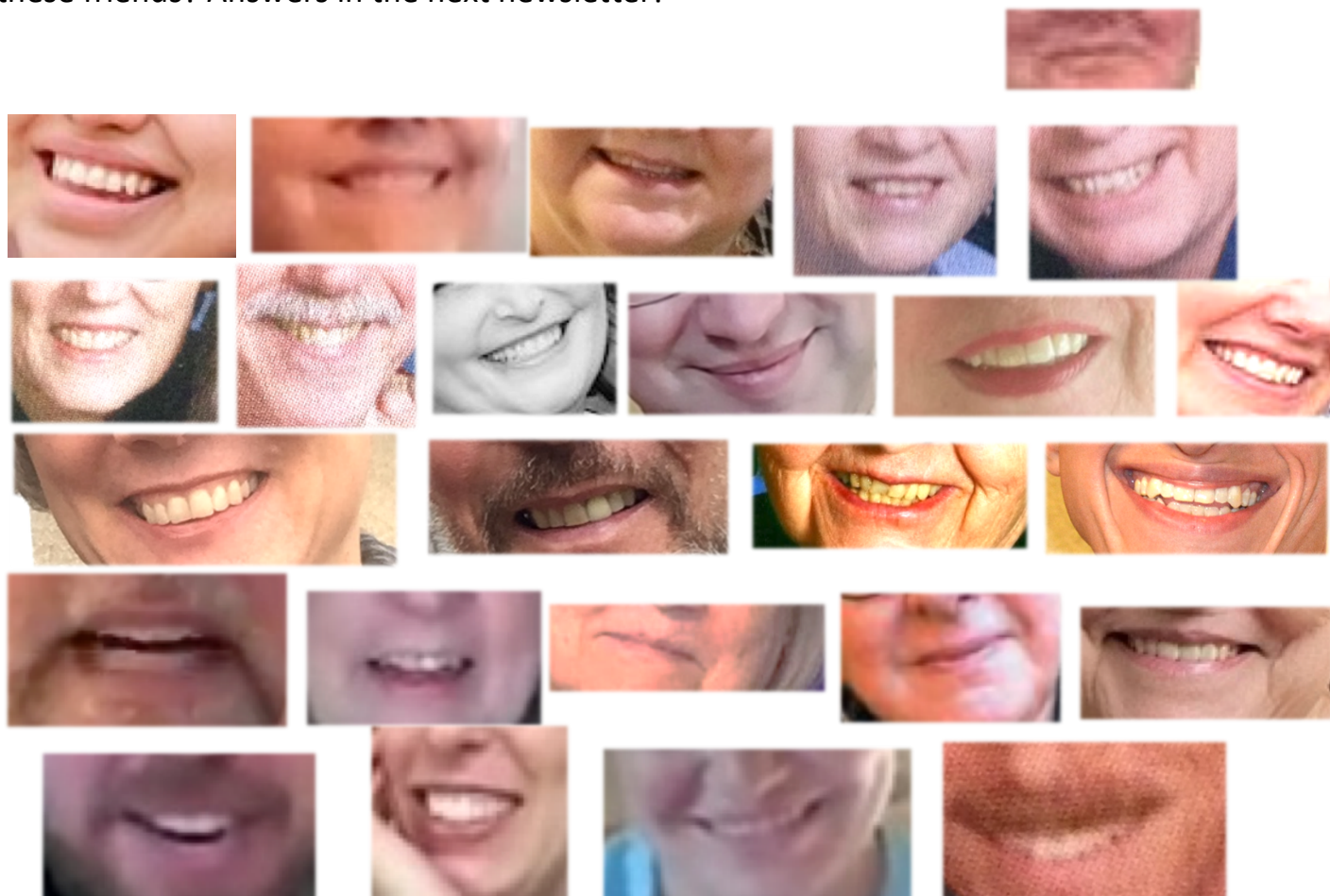
The Growing SST will meet in mid-May to listen to each other and dream about possibilities for the quarter, and then meet again in June to discuss and get focused on where the Spirit is calling. The SST will gather other volunteers from the congregation to help in fulfilling the shared tasks of congregational life.

Thank you for being part of the Seasonal Steering Team adventure at CPUC! Sign up link below and in the Thursdays pastor 's e-blasts or contact Karolyn Gilbertson.

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

Smiles, Smiles, Smiles

With **masking during worship now becoming optional**, we are easily identifying a few more people. We'd gotten to know them by their eyes. Now back to the smiles. Can you identify these friends? Answers in the next newsletter!



From Pastor Matthias

Dear CPUC

We have a week blocked off on our family calendar in May to do an extensive amount of planting in the back yard. When we moved in, the yard was a mix of patchy grass, dirt, and had clearly been a favorite spot for the previous family's dog to dig, run wild, and have its way.



The possibility of planting bunches of small green native seedlings of different types and kinds feels hopeful, especially as we endure this prolonged grip of cold weather that just doesn't seem to quit this year.

While this familial interaction with the earth feels hopeful, there are plenty of other more, dire narratives about the state of our earth. Whether it is those who still cling to the idea that climate change is a hoax or exaggerated, or whether it is those who have flipped the switch the other way to saying "It's too late! There is nothing to be done!"

Neither denial nor despair leaves much room or motivation for any action. Pay too much attention to those narratives and it can feel like there are only two options, both of them bad.

In a recent interview in the New York Time Magazine (1/29/2023), Robin Wall Kimmerer named the false dichotomy of these two options. "The story that we have to illuminate is that we don't have to be complicit with destruction. That's the assumption: that there are these powerful forces around us that we can't possibly counteract. The refusal to be complicit can be a kind of resistance to dominant paradigms, but it's also an opportunity to be creative and joyful..."

Our faith should lead us out of despair and into agency where we do what we can and dream up new ways to resist the destruction of our good earth.

Turn off this screen and go outside. Marvel at the news of what is happening in the earth around you.

As the saying goes, "the best time to plant a tree is twenty years ago, but the second best time is now" (or, as soon as the ground is thawed enough).

Yours on the way,
Pastor Matthias

At the April Meeting the Council...



-- received and approved the pastor's March report. In addition to the normal tasks that reoccur daily, weekly or monthly, Pastor Matthias' main focus was working with the Awakening Seasonal Steering Team (SST), leading two Sundays of Inquirer's Classes, special prep for Holy Week and Easter services, and a request for using vacation time July 3-9

-- passed a motion affirming the **addition of new members** Shannon and Derek and children. Warm welcome!! A formal acknowledgement and welcome will be offered later.

[editor's note: Shannon has been diligently working with Kay on Sundays providing wonderful experiences for children in the adjoining Peace Room. Note the stained glass windows!]

--passed a motion to return to pre-pandemic **summer worship starting time of 9:30 am**, effective the (usual) second Sunday of June. This will not interfere with **Adult Forum time** from 9-10 am as that usually runs only to Anniversary Sunday, first week in June; but then the SST's and participants can decide whether to continue at an alternate time during the summer.

--passed a motion to resume the **normal practice of communion** received at the front of the sanctuary with bread and wine intinction offered, starting first Sunday in May. One communion server will also take the elements to anyone wishing to stay in their pew. A discussion was had identifying this as a decision of the council, and not only the responsibility of the seasonal steering team to manage.

--passed a motion to **change** our **masking policy** to that of "**optional during worship**" starting this coming Sunday April 16. We follow guidance from medical professionals and scientific research which indicates this would now be safe, according to documents and policies found by our Covid policy team. Kay will spot places on our website needing a change to indicate this, Pastor Matthias will change signage, Jill will update greeters, a smaller greeting table can be used in Manomin upper landing.

--discussed a possibility brought up by the SST, to provide one or more places for "**God's Refrigerator Door**", on which could be posted events and children's art, prayer requests. etc.

--discussed the possibility of **changing the council meeting time** as two members are unable to come on second Tuesdays. A poll will be sent to all members listing all the possibilities to see if there is any day/week that is possible for all.

--noted a Kudos and "thumbs up" to the Awakening SST for their thoughtful and creative ways to celebrate together the service experiences of Holy Thursday and Easter Sunday Breakfast.

Technology Territory

For those with scientific curiosity, we have measured the amount of particulate in the air in our worship space. All the readings, regardless of when taken, show a very good air quality.

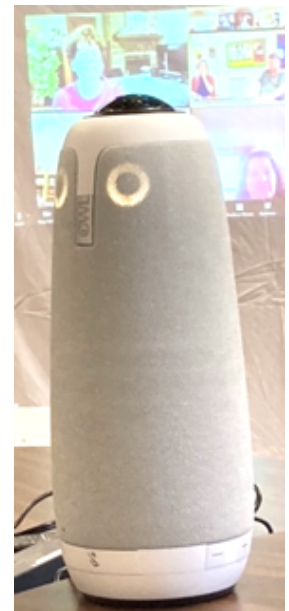
The Corona viruses are air-borne and spread that way, so we wanted to see exactly how vulnerable we are. On April 16, Kelly and Susan tested and recorded the particulates using the ATMOTUBE monitor which links to a smartphone.

Measurements were taken before the service (before many people were in the space), after the service (after an hour of attendance) and immediately above the "Cubie" air filters constructed by Carly. The result, shown on the table, indicate we are at very safe levels. Generally numbers under 12 in the first two sizes and under 50 in the 10-micron size are acceptable according to the device manufacturers. * instruction to make air filters at <https://cleanaircrew.org/box-fan-filters/>

(Micron means micrograms per cubic meter.)	1 micron	2.5 microns	10 microns
before service in pew	1.0	1.6	3.0
after service in pew	1.0	2.0	4.8
holding device above Cubie	1.0	1.4	2.5

The "Owl"

This little creature now enables each council meeting to be hybrid (both in-person and zoom attended). It has an omni-directional microphone (picks up sounds from all sides) and speaker (projects sound on all sides). On the top it has a 360-degree camera to show all participants seated around a table. It also has sound activated cameras that give close up of those who are speaking at a given moment. Thanks to FREC for giving us the OWL after they no longer needed it for their meetings.



Save the Dates - PRIDE Celebrations 2023

Plan to represent CPUC at two PRIDE events this summer!

- June 25 - SUNDAY – Minneapolis PRIDE Parade – 11 am
- July 8 - SATURDAY – W. St. Paul PRIDE at the West St. Paul Sports Complex



More details in June!

The Awakening SST – Carly, Maria, Kay, Jackie, Karen. Lay Ministry helpers – Pastor Matthias, Diane, Jill

How do we welcome ourselves and newcomers?

Would you like a pastry? how about some cheese and crackers? maybe an orange or section of a banana? a few pretzels? maybe a chocolate chip cookie? surprise - orange juice today; a baby carrot or two?

Prayer both drains and fills us. Sometimes worship is hard work. Then time for our bodies to relax into the company of each other. Everyone comes and everyone enjoys.

BUT, not enough people volunteer to set the table! The pastries are automatically there through the magic of Sandy D., Jackie, Barb and Susan, who pick up the free Doughnations from Panera every Saturday night. (You are invited to join the pickup service once in awhile!) Some members like to bring in a few other options of fruits or vegetables or protein; the free will offering is used to cover those expenses, and if it does not cover, more is available in the cash box. Plenty inexpensive options are found at Aldi's.

This can be just a twenty-minute volunteer opportunity before worship to set out small plates, and sweets on platters. The children as well as adults, are always delighted with variety. If you bring optional foods that you normally use anyway, take home whatever is left.

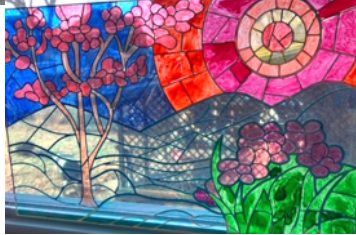
There is a sign-up sheet in fellowship hall on the round table or sometimes on the food table. Contact Susan if you need help.

And thank you to those who brought in empty clean take-home containers for unclaimed sweets; we now have enough to last us through 2023!

May Birthdays & Celebrations

♥ 13 - Mike & Lynne
16 - Maria
21 - Sasha
27 - Diane
♥ 28 - Jim & Karen

...and the children are back!



Easter Sunday Children's Sermon

Arriving at the tomb



Opening the tomb



Finding the tomb empty



Searching for Jesus



Jesus FOUND
in the pews with
the people!!



Why Reparations at Cherokee Park United Church? and how? by Susan Strebis

Our sermons during four of the weeks of Lent focused on the topic of Reparations. To try to give this large issue a simple explanation, the need for Reparations comes about when white Americans realize that the history books through the present, have told us that the progress of our nation came about because of brave European explorers and then the ingenuity and work of immigrants pouring in from Europe. And realizing this is a lie. Little attention was paid to the fact that this is much like Russian leaders today, commanding an invasion and killing the population and decimating a nearby country, Ukraine, simply because they want it.

The success of the U.S.A. was actually built on the back of captured slaves which started a great accumulation of wealth for white people, plus the centuries of pushing off and killing the indigenous natives of this land, to steal the lands and plunder nature of all its resources of timber, minerals, & native animals. Non-white people are the foundation of the work and resources; but they have been forced to work, suffer, and often die, for this. And their successive generations continually bear the brunt of unequal opportunity and treatment. The result has been a division of our country of people against one another, and a climate change which may well scrub the planet earth of human existence.

One great leader in our midst is **Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light**. Sounds like an electric utility company; it has a potential to be more powerful than that. And has been very beneficial to our church, as a number of our members have been attending Reparations workshops affiliated with this organization. You would do well to add its website to your daily reading: mnipl.org Following is their latest short daily information piece.

*"Minnesota is an amazing place AND it has **one of the worst racial wealth gaps in the country**. From its founding, our state was built with the wealth of slaveholders, on stolen Native land. The purposeful exclusion of Black Minnesotans from our economy and destruction of wealth has left Black families in Minnesota with a 2021 median income of \$48,000. That's nearly half the income of a median White family - \$80,900. The Minnesota Migration Act (SF 2980/HF 2397) is a necessary step towards healing in our state. It acknowledges and apologizes for centuries of systemic racism in Minnesota, and creates a commission to provide financial reparations for Black Minnesotans."*

Various organizations, mostly non-profit, have jumped on board to rescue the Kin-dom. Even if just bit by bit. **This and future issues will list a few efforts - some national, some state, some Twin Cities, some congregations/non or for-profits, and some individuals.** Hopefully we will soon be on that list too. Actually much of the work we have done in past decades has started this, even if not named so. If you have a story or experience of Reparations, please offer that to share with our readers.

Reparations, not just a concept, not just more words

What has the study of Reparations resulted in, in terms of **real action**? To receive stories on this topic, check out Healing Minnesota Stories blog at healingmnstories.wordpress.com

Individual Actions: An **organizer** of the Reparations Circles and MNPL, now includes **in her home budget** an annual "tax" to pay to local indigenous needs in recognition that she lives on land stolen from the original inhabitants. A **CPUC white St. Paul family** has started to pay an annual fee to local indigenous community needs, as a "property tax" noting that the land which they "own" was actually stolen before they purchased it.

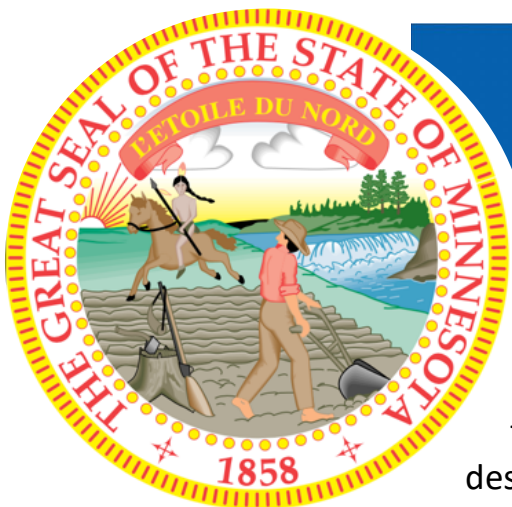
In Minneapolis: **Our Saviour's Lutheran Church** is active in supporting the local indigenous and low-income residents. Recently it showed up and voiced support for the East Phillips and Little Earth neighborhood to purchase the nearby Roof Depot abandoned warehouse and convert it to an indoor Urban Farm, affordable housing, and other community-friendly uses instead of a city expansion of its Public Works Yard, bringing in more pollution. Also, their Reparations Committee, which started in 2019, adopted a policy starting in 2022 of offering **2% of their annual budget** to help local indigenous peoples' lives.



[Rachel Thunder lead this community group demonstration. The back of her jacket displays two AIM emblems. The American Indian Movement started in 1968 in Minnesota state penitentiaries by Clyde Bellecourt, Dennis Banks and others; Running River continues in this effort starting, an AIM chapter in Pennsylvania state prisons. This group moves to where it is needed to defend indigenous culture, and protect mother Earth. AIM activist leader Leonard Peltier was arrested in 1972 and remains in Coleman I Federal Prison in Florida despite being proven innocent.]

(continued) The **Minnesota** state legislature House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee proposed to **transfer ownership of the Upper Sioux Agency State Park** near Granite Falls to the Upper Sioux Community; Granite Falls mayor Smiglewski said. "I hope there will be a way to form a collaboration between the Upper Sioux Community, the Minnesota DNR and the Minnesota Historical Society to jointly operate the park and teach about the complex and difficult history that happened there to help the community heal. The cultural heritage and the natural environment at the park are priceless and irreplaceable."

The **Omnibus Legacy Finance Bill** (\$820.8 million) passed the House in mid-April and went on to the Senate, including \$4.6 million (= .05 %) to the Indian Affairs Council to **preserve Dakota and Ojibwe languages**.



The Minnesota State Flag/Emblems Redesign Bill (HF274 heard Feb 21, 2023)

The [state seal](#) is designed to be rich in symbolism, such as cultivated ground representing agriculture and a tree stump to represent the timber industry. It also depicts a white farmer tilling the soil near a river while a Native American on horseback rides toward the setting sun. We know what this image depicts, as a poem written by the artist's wife describes the intent, being an image of pushing out natives and promoting white people progress and domination.

The state flag is "Problematic " said Kevin Jensvold, Tribal Chairman for the Upper Sioux Dakota Community, testifying at the MN Senate Committee on Environment, Climate, and Legacy. "It does depict every moment of pushing us further and further away, ... There's only certain things we can do and that's just to bring attention to difficulties that are posed. The truth, such as it is, just sits there. It is neither this nor that. It simply exists in this day and age. None of us helped to create those things, **but we can be here to change those things.**"

A State Emblems Redesign Commission is being called for to "develop and adopt a new design for the official state seal and a new design for the [official state flag](#). The designs must accurately and respectfully reflect Minnesota's shared history, resources, and diverse cultural communities.



Cherokee Park United Church
United Church of Christ/Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Open & Affirming, Multicultural, Antiracist
371 W. Baker Street
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Sunday Worship 10:15 a.m., online and in person
<https://www.facebook.com/cherokeeparkchurch/live>
Pastor: Rev. Matthias Peterson-Brandt
651-227-4275
cpuc@usfamily.net
cherokeeparkunited.org

We get to write the next chapter of the story.

Liddy Grantland, justice worker and Sojourner writer