



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 2023

(Note: Most last names are omitted from website issues for reasons of privacy. They are included on the personal copies sent to members. Feel free to contact the church if you wish to become involved.)

Yes, indeed, the brightest bulb from Tom

New bulbs in the church = even more savings.

The photo shows Derek installing one of our new LED bulbs. On the fixture nearest our projection, we also "masked" a panel, allowing less light to illuminate the wall, so the projected image shows up more brightly.

These bulbs have been an evolution at CPUC. At first, we had 300W incandescent bulbs that consumed 2,400 Watts when running the eight hanging fixtures that light the sanctuary.

In 2012 when we installed our solar array, we replaced those with eight 85 Watt "compact" fluorescent bulbs which gave out an equivalent amount of lumens (light). They, in combination, consumed 680 Watts. At the time, LEDs were not available in such large size, and were very expensive in anything approaching that size.



Now, 11 years later, we replaced the eight CFL bulbs with LED bulbs which Jim Shatek obtained at Lowes. They cost less than we originally paid for the CFLs, (and less than the original incandescents) and use just 36 Watts apiece, for a total of 288 Watts. Also, these bulbs have a life span of 15,000 hours compared to a life span of only 1000 hours for the original incandescent bulbs. We've come a long way from 2.4KW!



Loaves and Fishes

Thursday, July 6

Cherokee Park United Church members and friends will be called upon once more to serve meals at St. Matthews. Our response has been admirable in past opportunities, and in this one, we will likely step up as usual.

Our church can be proud of the way in which we respond to every opportunity to serve that comes our way. To volunteer for Loaves and Fishes on July 6, shift 1, preparation, from about **3:30 to 5:30** and shift 2 from about **5:30 to 7:00**, serving and clean-up, **please email Wayne**.

REMINDER: *SUNDAY JULY 16 Worship (and potluck) in the (Cherokee) Park*

From Pastor Matthias

Dear CPUC,

The poet Danez Smith released a collection of poems in 2020 titled *Homie*, but inside the cover they include a note about the title: “this book was titled *homie* because i don’t want non-black people saying *my n*** out loud. this book is really titled *my n***.”



It is a reflection on Smith’s part that language is contextual and malleable, meaning different things depending on how words are used and who is speaking them when and where. As a poet, it is also an acknowledgement that once words are released into the world (so to speak) we don’t control how they are heard or the impact they have.

Language is ever-changing and terms that were once in common use fall out of use, understandings of particular words or phrases changes, and as new words emerge.

This is true of ableist language (e.g. using disability terminology to describe ignorance), gender and sexuality (such as ever more diverse terms for specificity and accuracy), and racial ethnic descriptors.

Recently I have seen a push in some places for replacing violent language and metaphors. For instance we might talk about “shooting” an email when “sending” works just fine. Or having a “deadline” when we could instead talk about something being due by a certain day. Google “evolving from violent language” and you can find a wide host of other colloquialisms, the violence of which I mostly hadn’t considered until having it pointed out in this way.

The Church is no exception. In our worship and liturgies we shift language for God away from masculine pronouns, honoring the truth that God is beyond human concepts of gender. We also shift “Kingdom” to “Kin-dom” to decouple God from human hierarchical, patriarchal ideas and instead lift up kinship, mutuality, and love as central to what God is about in the world.

We are called to care for the world and love our neighbor. We are called to tend the seedlings in the garden of God: seedlings of peace, justice, grace. Updating our mental dictionaries and lexicons is one way we can continue to be shaped by the Spirit of God and be ever more aware of God’s kin-dom all around us.

Yours on Jesus’ path,
Pastor Matthias

At the June Meeting the Council...

---received the Pastor's report including remarks on the Festival of Homiletics he attended in Minneapolis during his study week; interesting points included that many of the featured speakers illustrated how you tell stories that bring our lives into the Gospels, and how **presenters involved** laughter as a way to help participants let their guards down so they would be more open to hear the hard stuff that must come. He also attended a gathering of 10-12 congregations for "small churches"; of note is that **71% of UCC churches have 50 or less members**. Looking ahead he is preparing for our Worship in the Park July 16, and has obtained worship leaders for during his absence in future vacation days.

---received Mike's clerk report; he and Jill attended the Presbytery meeting virtually and Pastor Matthias attended in person. The Presbytery concluded a self-assessment started in 2020 on Institutional Race and Equity Issues; a link is below. A short primer form is also included which is very interesting, including a point on the **possible negative results of maintaining "Minnesota Nice."**

<https://sites.google.com/view/ptcaraceandequity/assessment-report-may-2023>

---spent time reviewing and refining the Council Norms, including the addition of offering all **council meetings virtually** in the future, in addition to the in-person mode. *Members should be aware that they are always invited to attend any council meetings (although they do not participate in discussions but can be put on the agenda in advance if they wish to speak on a subject.) With meetings now being offered virtually this might be a convenient possibility.*

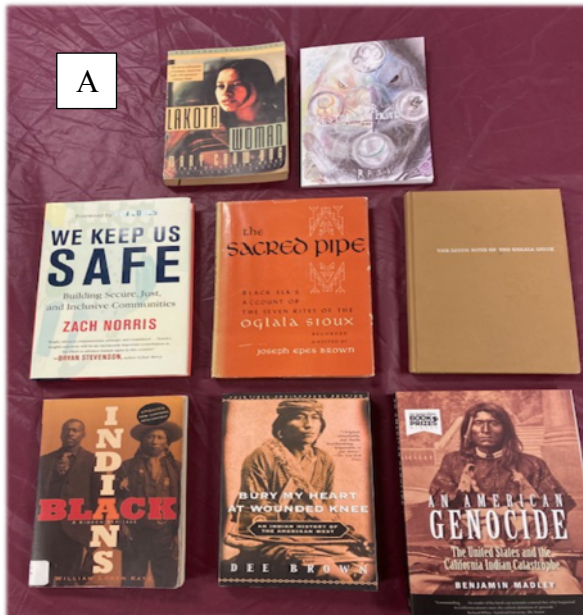
---received the Property Management Report that our irrigation system needs **major valve replacements** (current may be 30 years old!) Bids ranged up to \$1000 and the council approved the lowest of the three bids of \$565 to Jim Strickler of Allison Plumbing, who has done previous good work for several members.

---spent time considering what we want to offer for **Children's Faith Formation in the future**. Members each shared their personal "top nine" essential topics. Next steps are to talk to the families who have younger children as to their own ideas and preferences; various council members offered to contact these families for input. There were a number of options planned three years back, but then the pandemic happened and the church no longer was meeting in person. Now we can get back to again considering these options or any others that might be suggested. Pre-pandemic, we had been offering "Kids on the Move," in which children were in worship until the sermon started, at which point they left with volunteer adult leaders to do their own lesson in the Fellowship Hall or Rainbow Room downstairs; this was an every-other-week model. Another suggestion is to have a monthly lesson for children before worship. The intent would not be to try to include all options but just try one and see where it leads us.

---received remarks from Lay Ministry and the new Seasonal Steering Team for the "Growing Season" of July-Aug-Sept., led by Karolyn. Current group members are Phyllis A., Nona, Shannon. A few more people are needed to round out this group.

Reading books at the cabin??

Read some "nowstory" - it's not history as it still goes on, the past totally affects the present. Take a book along from the table in Fellowship Hall.



Group A purchased by Jim & Karen as recommended by Chief Thunderbird, incarcerated at Benner SCI. Group B donated by native friends of Ellie from Pine Ridge reservation.

Below, a purchase to consider:
(Amazon kindle \$11 or paperback \$14.50)

The Relentless Business of Treaties: How Indigenous Land Became U.S. Property

by Martin Case "This book is not just good, it is great. It reads like a conversation at a campfire—interesting, surprising, and inspirational. . . Reading this book is not like reading history, it's like reading literature, a tragedy by a writer who understands that history is not at its best a social science but a part of the humanities and the arts." from author, Roger Welsch

"This book has implications today that every US citizen should grapple with and understand. Although you won't find these stories in textbooks, they show how the United States was built and how some Americans built their fortunes. This country's unvarnished history—not always pretty, and distant from the mythological narrative that most children learn—is the version that belongs in classrooms." from Edwin Schupman, Manager of National Education, National Museum of the American Indian

Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians But Were Afraid to Ask,

by Anton Treuer (A copy of the first edition of this book in Fellowship Hall.) Consider this if you're looking for a good nonfiction "starter" book by a native author; just republished with new info. Sold at *Birchbark Books*, owned by Anishinaabe author Louise Erdrich (Turtle Mountain Chippewa). Her fiction like *Night Watchman* and *The Sentence* is truly masterful.



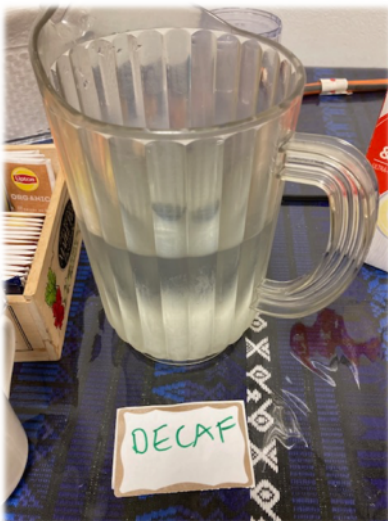
We are again participating in the **West St. Paul PRIDE gathering on July 8**, at the West St. Paul Sports Complex, corner of Wentworth and Oakdale, from **11 am to 4 pm**. We need your help to represent CPUC at our table that day! If you are available, please let Pastor Matthias or Jill know that you can come for a couple of hours to meet the rainbow of people celebrating PRIDE together. Thank you!

Whatever happened to the mission trip to build the sweat lodge

at Benner State Prison in Pennsylvania? Lots of questions, not many reasonable answers. The prison finds excuses to delay this effort as it does not understand it is in their best interest as well as a great part of the rehabilitative process and ongoing mental and spiritual health for indigenous incarcerated individuals. The build has now been delayed twice, the latest reason being the reported need for a building permit, although that requirement was quickly determined to be a false assumption. But it again delayed the process, even though our members and others already had purchased their airfare to get there. We will relay progress as it occurs. Prayers are needed.

C'est la soupe qui fait le soldat

is a French phrase attributed to both Frederick the Great and Napoleon, which we translate as "an army marches on its stomach." This could also be true, in a sense, at CPUC as our fellowship time after worship is always well attended and people are reluctant to leave, needing not only the food, but the nourishment of fellowship, in



order to continue our march forward in the name of justice and mercy. Matter of fact, some people show up pretty late for worship, but don't miss the fellowship time!

Please consider helping make this as stress-free as possible and volunteer to come 20 minutes early to set out the refreshments and/or help clean up after. The same people are doing this week after week and note, many are much older than you are!! We don't want fellowship to have to reduce to the picture at left!! See sign-up sheet and indicate "need partner" if you are new at this and want one.

Newsletter

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

Mary M.

-collator Kathy B.

July Birthdays & Celebrations

♥07 - Valerie & Matthias

12 - Carly

14 - Tom

♥20 - Joy and Lon

21 - Kristin

26 - Sebastian

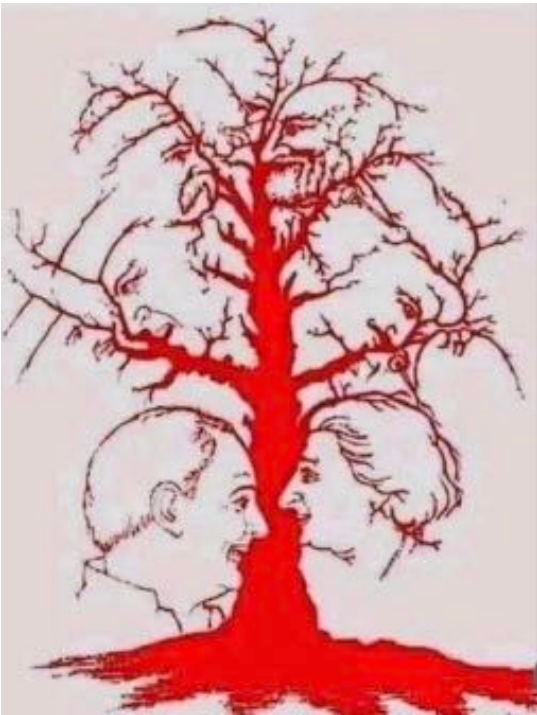
28 - Dave

29 - Meliza

(Note: if there are birthdays we
are missing please let Susan
know).

Other June Birthdays that were celebrated included our Pentecost celebration of the birthday of the church, complete with party hats and candles.





Reparations? I don't see why?

Much of life is a matter of perspective. We see things as we want to, as what is comfortable or desirable. Looking beyond, in a different way, lends more light and truth.

This illustration looks like a tree with a few faces at the bottom. However there is more to be seen, if we are looking closely. If we actually look for them there are at least 8 more people there. There are many unnoticed and forgotten people. But their lives do impact ours, and ours certainly impact theirs.

Writers of our American history books have told stories from the perspective of white European explorers and immigrants, many of whom honestly felt they were following a truth outlined by proclamations of the Roman

Catholic Church's Popes, (deceptively positive-named Doctrine of Discovery) explaining that Christians are supposed to suppress non-Christians and non-white "pagans", and take away all their possessions and make them slaves. Sounds preposterous, but there it is. And if something benefits a person, they are likely to believe it. Were there people who stood up to this cruel philosophy? Yes, but they were in the minority and most likely not already powerful and/or rich (or men) so their words were not heeded.

As noted in the last newsletter, examples of reparation actions will be shared here. For an up to date accounting of what is happening around the Twin Cities, ask at jessica@mnipl.org to be included on Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light's email list for the Google Groups "Reparations" group.

In Minnesota: A Bush Foundation-funded effort will issue \$50 million to the descendants of slaves living in Minnesota and the Dakotas over eight years in the hopes of building Black wealth, reversing systemic injustices and positively impacting communities. The foundation and Nexus Community Partners, the St. Paul group administering the program, believe the Open Road Fund is the first of its kind in Minnesota and one of the first large-scale programs nationwide that ties grants to the descendants of slavery.

Nexus began taking grant applications on June 19, "Juneteenth", the federal holiday that commemorates the end of slavery in the United States. Grants up to \$50,000 will be issued to 800 descendants of slavery by 2031, of which at least half are expected to land in Minnesota, having a larger Black population than either of the Dakotas. They say the program is not a reparations effort

because it is not extensive enough. But the grants are seen as a way to help address longstanding injustices resulting from slavery, Jim Crow laws, redlining in housing and police brutality. Individuals can apply for the grants to buy a home or property; to pay for education; to expand or start a business; to buy life insurance policies or use on healing and economic justice initiatives. Up to five applicants can pool their grants together to collectively buy one property, as the fund believes in cooperative development. Encouraged to apply are single parents, senior citizens, the formerly incarcerated, those living with disabilities and members of the LGBTQ community. Applicants must live in Minnesota, South or North Dakota and be a descendant of the Atlantic slave trade, including the Caribbean, North, Central, and South America. Descendants of formerly enslaved people who repatriated to Africa also are eligible. Applications are due July 28.

University of Minnesota: (From Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light: 4/12/23): In the world of truth telling, there are truths we must tell and those we must hear. For now, this is the latter. Here's the [link to an article](#) describing important research about the University of Minnesota's role in land theft and genocide.

Oshkigin Noojimo'iwe, Naḡḡgi Wan PPPetu Un Ihduwaššš'ake He Oyate Kiŋ Zaniwicccaye Kte is the full underlying report and call for reparations. It was created by the Native-organized, Native-led **TRUTH Project** and funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The truths uncovered in this research were so tragic that the project received additional funding from the foundation to pay for a Native American grief counselor and a spiritual advisor for researchers.

A small bit of what was uncovered: Among its troubling findings, the report by the [TRUTH](#) (Towards Recognition and University-Tribal Healing) Project concludes:

- The U's founding board of regents "committed genocide and ethnic cleansing of Indigenous peoples for financial gain, using the institution as a shell corporation through which to launder lands and resources."
- The U's permanent trust fund controls roughly \$600 million in royalties from iron ore mining, timber sales and other revenues derived from land taken from the Ojibwe and the Dakota through the 1862 Morrill Act.
- The university has contributed to the "erasure" of Native people by failing to teach a full history of the land on which it was founded.

The University has taken some meaningful steps toward addressing some of their concerns, tribal leaders say. In 2021, the U created a program that offers free or substantially reduced tuition to many enrolled members of the state's 11 federally recognized tribes. It's a start.

Next Issue: One area of Reparations greatly needing attention is the re-thinking of the **justice system**, because it targets people with no power, with the largest percentage being black and indigenous people. Because of the history of this country keeping non-white people in oppressed situations, the justice system affects them adversely in greater numbers than usual percentages would predict.

A few announcements from Sophie:

On July 15th, Clearwater Forest, a Presbyterian camp and retreat center, will be hosting a bike tour, adventure-a-thon, and LuWow. Participants will have the opportunity to try fun outdoor sports. Sophie is working at Clearwater this summer and would love to see a CPUC turnout for this fun family event! Overnight lodging is available. Registration is at www.clearwaterforest.org or 218-678-2325.

Clearwater Forest Adventure- a-Thon

Paddle Bike
Run/Walk

Saturday, July 15
at 2 pm

**(Kayaks, canoes, and bikes
are available on site!)**

**LuWow & Live
Music at 5 pm!**



Silent Auction - contact Emma at office@clearwaterforest.org if you would like to donate!

What to Bring: lawn chair or blanket, beverage of choice (non-alcoholic beverages will be available)

Register at
clearwaterforest.org or
on our Facebook page.
Email Emma at
office@clearwaterforest.org
with questions.



SCENIC BIKE TOUR

Saturday, July 15, 2023

50/30/8

Route Map

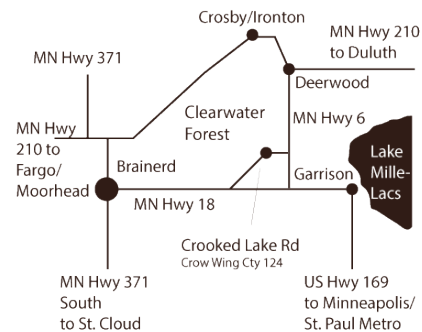


Clearwater Fun Ride - 8 miles
Clearwater Family Ride - 30 miles
Clearwater Challenge - 50 miles

7:00 a.m. registration, breakfast
7:30 a.m. start time 30/50 riders
8:00 a.m. start time family ride

Registration information may
be found at:
www.clearwaterforest.org

Here's where we are located



More than a Ride!

*Come ride with us in Minnesota's beautiful
Lake Country and support young lives.*



16595 Crooked Lake Rd
Deerwood, MN 56444
218-678-2325
www.clearwaterforest.org

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 9:30 a.m. (summer hours) online and in person
<https://www.facebook.com/cherokeeparkchurch/live>
Pastor: Rev. Matthias Peterson-Brandt
651-227-4275
cpuc@usfamily.net
cherokeeparkunited.org

*Opinion is really the lowest form of human knowledge.
It requires no accountability, no understanding.
The highest form of knowledge is Empathy,
for it requires us to suspend our egos
and live in another's world.*

Bill Bullard