



## **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 June 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.)

## *Landscape Celebration of Beauty and Friendship*

(in other words, come help de-leaf and tidy up the flower beds so we, and the bees and birds, can enjoy their perennial flowernessing)

**Saturday June 3, 9 am to noon** (Rain date - June 10)

BYOGSKPW (gloves, shears, kneeling pads, water) although we always have extra on hand. If possible rsvp to Diane or Susan to anticipate how many areas we can finish. There's a reward for any child who can identify five of these flowers that bloom in our spaces.



## *55th Anniversary Celebration – Sunday June 4*

**10:15 worship with fellowship to follow**

It's been 55 years since Cherokee Heights Presbyterian merged with St. John's UCC to form Cherokee Park United Church. That's a reason to celebrate! Our worship service will include awarding 25-year membership pins to Karen H., Ingrid and Deborah. Please wear your 25- or 50-year membership pins to church that day!

After worship we will have special cake and ice cream refreshments. There will also be some historic CPUC artifacts on display. Join us as we celebrate this dynamic and loving little church that does big things.

## *Enjoying fellowship after Sunday services*

Please help us keep this fun tradition going and volunteer for set up or clean up. Contact Susan if you need a partner, especially if you are new to this. It can be as simple as just coming 15 minutes early and plating the free Panera goodies that have been brought in; if you like to be creative, bring in a few other snacks - your expenses are reimbursed by the free will donation and our kitchen cash box. See the sign-up sheet in fellowship hall on the round table or on the food table.





## *Rise and Shine at CPUC this Summer!*

### **Worship start-time shifts to 9:30 a.m. on June 11**

This change in time helps us skirt some of the summer heat in our wonderful but only “prayer-conditioned” sanctuary.

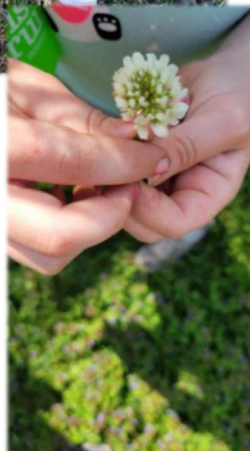
## *Outdoor Worship in Cherokee Park!*

**Sunday, July 16 at 9:30 am.**

Look for more details in the July newsletter and announcements.

## **EARTH CARE**

On Sunday, May 21, the Awakening Seasonal Steering Team hosted an event for all ages to celebrate the ways we care for our earth and each other through our daily actions and choices. The Rev. Sandy Dodson lead us in a wonderful, earth-focused worship service featuring a dramatic reading of the creation story based on the first chapter of Genesis. Earth-friendly snacks were enjoyed at fellowship time. (Some cookies even looked like the earth!) Those who participated in the phone photo scavenger hunt had a lot of fun looking for earth care-related items in our neighborhood. Some even picked up trash as they took pictures on their phones! We closed with a reading about celebrating earth (see following) and keeping it healthy for all life upon it. It was a good day for the planet.



## Earth Care

A home that was not for people.  
OK, it's an empty home!

The record keeper and the trash collector  
AND the solar panels!



## Earth Blessing

*adapted from a piece by J. David Moore*

May Earth's song reach us in our deepest, wildest places.  
May it be heard as we move upon her, as we partake of her sustenance.  
As we nestle in her waters and grasses.  
May we hear the voices of the stones, the winds and the waters.  
Creatures and plants, above the human chatter.  
Softly but not silently, so we can heed them when we must.  
And at long last, may earth's protectors declare victory in a mighty sigh of relief.  
May this sigh resound in ocean depth's and please all the watery souls.  
May whales and wolves rejoice with weird shouts that all is well.  
May our children's children toss stones from shore and hear, in the ripples, our names  
as some of those who cared for the earth in our days.  
So May it Be.



## *From Pastor Matthias*

Dear CPUC

“Ruth Wilson Gilmore teaches that abolition is less about what we must get rid of, and more about what we might build and orient toward.” (From enfleshed “uprooting and planting anew.”)

This quote has been rumbling around in the rock tumbler of my mind lately, thinking about how we have to cultivate and create NOW the ways of being in the world, the communities, the networks, mutual support systems, relationship with the earth we want to live by.



There is often the argument against change (e.g. fossil fuels, scaling down policing, etc). “Well we don’t have anything to replace the system in place!” If we get rid of fossil fuels, how will we power our energy systems? If we get rid of police, who will respond to crimes? If we get rid of prisons, what will we do with people who commit harms or break laws? If we reduce the amount of car infrastructure, how will people get around? If we change the way we do church, what will happen?

These arguments—while totally unimaginative and serving powers that be—do sometimes have some appeal. I think this is because the system you know, however unjust, flawed, or nonfunctional, is at least known. The argument preys on our general fear of the unknown and our anxiousness about uncertainty.

As followers of Jesus we are called out of static and to be co-creators with God on new things that the Spirit is doing, whether in our lives, in the church, or in the world. The first disciples had to step out of the boat into the waves and find the faithful path after Jesus’ departure. It takes courage, but we are braver together than apart. We are more imaginative and discerning together.

"What sort of world shall we plant and grow together?" When we focus on this question, and start to follow the Spirit into new ways of being, we make a world where the systems and structures of harm and exclusion become ruins, over-grown by lushness and new life.

Yours on the way,  
Pastor Matthias

### *At the May Meeting the Council...*



-- received a report, via zoom, from Sarah Gleason from the **FREC** Core Leadership Team; the core executive team is spending time in training themselves on conflict management; and they find that in doing all the required business tasks they also needed to spend more time to build relationships; they also are now in the "re-imagine FREC" mode to contemplate what is the role they are now called to play.

--received the **pastor's report** on his various duties beyond the daily/weekly tasks, including meeting with the Awakening Season Steering Team, the Lay Ministries Team, leading the bi-monthly meeting of the Presbytery's Pastoral Leader Care Team, presiding over a memorial service for friend of a CPUC member, meeting with a group of the Minnesota Conference UCC folks who are collaborating to plan our involvement in Minneapolis Pride Parade and Festival June 24 & 25. Also devoting much time in creating ways to engage children personally in the children's worship times and finding artworks to use in worship which requires contacting artists for permission to use, sometimes resulting in conversations with artists who graciously want us to use it at no charge. Pastor Matthias will be taking study leave for the Festival of Homiletics help in Mpls May 15-21; Rev. Sandy will preach May 21.

--received a quarterly **financial report** from Lynne; we are working within our budget. Various reports may give a strange overall picture as in some months such as January, the *insurances* for the whole year are paid in advance to avoid any monthly payment service charges; this is made possible as some members also pay their entire year's commitment in January. Some seniors also take advantage of donating their yearly MDR (minimum distribution requirement from 401K's) as having it made out directly to the church avoids paying taxes on it. The *Loaves and Fishes* account may need a bit more than presently in it although the expense is less than what it was years back, as we just give \$250 each time and the L & F staff purchase the food more frugally than we can. It should be noted that 240 people were fed last month! Our commitment comes six times per year.

--received an update from Pastor Matthias on the upcoming mission trip to help build a **sweat lodge** for the inmates at Benner - Pennsylvania State Correctional Institution, June 8-10. Six people are traveling there including three of our members, and they are finding airfare very costly. Volunteers pay their own expenses for this 4-5-day trip; the council had approved a \$500 stipend for each of our member's expenses, and at this meeting approved the same amount for the other three people traveling there; people willing to sacrifice for this type of event are usually the ones who have the least money to spare. Funds will be taken from those already raised via the inmates' own offerings and the Go Fund Me effort after supply and other costs are handled, and any overage paid for from the congregation savings account

which holds 42K right now. There is interest in a blessing of the volunteers before they depart, and hearing from them after their return.

(cont) --spent time sharing thoughts on what makes a **welcoming atmosphere** for people who enter our spaces for the first time, gleaned insights from our own experiences of first welcome or situations going into places where we are unfamiliar. Conversation to continue at next meeting.

-- received updates from various ministries:

--**Property Management** needed to purchase a new control box for the lawn **irrigation** system, and also had to make corrections for an irrigation hose leak causing water to leak into the basement bathroom.; the **wifi** equipment is now relocated near the ceiling in Fellowship Hall so it's not low enough for children to run into it.;

--The **Tech Team** (which provides for virtual worship online each Sunday) desires to purchase a **pan/tilt/zoom camera**, with a possibility of applying to the Presbytery for a grant for it.

--**Faith Life** reports an **upsurge in children's attendance** which will require rethinking of how and where they are during worship, as being all together in the *Peace Room* has not been peaceful. We are charged to figure out how to manage their spiritual needs. Kay also found that *Seasons of Faith publications* are now going out of business; they involve much global art and music and Kay, Sandy D. and Pastor Tim wrote some of the curriculum for it. They are now selling out the remainder of their stock of *children's bibles* at 50% off, so we should purchase them as there are no other such wonderfully created bibles. Among other uses, we have been gifting them to parent of children being baptized here. There is \$565 left in the children's Faith Life Grant fund.



### **PRIDE Celebrations 2023**

CPUC will be marching in the Twin Cities PRIDE Parade at **11 am on June 25**. We will be marching with the MN UCC Conference delegation. (Stay tuned for our position number in the parade!) Please sign up at church or be in

touch with Pastor Matthias or Jill.

Please decide if you'd like to carpool from church (after 9:30 worship) or get to downtown Minneapolis on your own. We will celebrate **PRIDE in worship** that day.

**Wear your rainbow T-shirts and other PRIDE colors.**

We are also 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 Jackson know that you can come for a couple of hours to meet the rainbow of people celebrating PRIDE together. Thank you!

## *Mission Trip to Benner State Correctional Institution June 8-10*

Hopefully most of you know at least part of the story of how this trip came to be. Three years ago CPUC was asked, through members of the Mdewakanton Mendota Dakota Community, to be the funds-holder for a **sweat lodge to be built for indigenous inmates incarcerated at this prison in Pennsylvania**. The Federal prisons do already have them, as stipulated by the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, but somehow the PA state prisons discontinued any they had. A young inmate, Running River, used the knowledge he gained while studying towards his certification as a paralegal, to bring about, and win, a lawsuit against the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections. However, due to Covid, and the prison's ability to stall, it has not come about until now.

The funds donated by the inmates from their settlement was supplemented greatly by a Go Fund Me effort posted by Pastor Matthias, and other donations from our members and friends. (More funds are welcome.) In addition, the council approved to give stipends to the six people traveling there from Minnesota which might cover part of their personal expenses or other lodge-related expenses. Many months of planning were needed, and done without the prisoners' knowledge. This is a very detailed religious ceremonial practice, and much coordination and person power and supplies are needed. Coordinating with the Native American prison chaplain, Chief Good Bear, Pastor Matthias, Joy Sorensen-Navarre, and Lon Navarre, and three indigenous people from other areas in Minnesota will travel there; In addition others will travel from other states, at their own expense, and offer their time and energy for three days to make this happen.

This is truly a sacrifice for many. However, it will bring a great positive sacred blessing to otherwise mostly neglected, often unwanted, and unloved, prisoners. This group has vowed to live a better life through walking The Red Road of Native American wisdom and practice. The prison is told they must allow the lodge ceremony to be conducted four times a year. However they may limit the number of men at one time, so each person may possibly only experience it twice a year.

Following is a description of how a sweat lodge must be constructed. The prison has provided a fenced-in space for this. Ceremonies must be conducted in a certain way; it should be followed by a "feast" although it is unknown whether the prison will allow that. We may have a chance to pray together with the Minnesota group before they leave, or be together to hear about their experience after they return. Below are a few further comments from Joy.

This is a true act of Reparation - to help our indigenous siblings reclaim their sacred heritage; from 1883, **up until 1978, the United States government banned Indian practices**, to complete the process of stamping out any indigenous existence.

"Traditionally, the Inipi is understood as a way of healing and cleansing. Often you'll hear someone comment, 'My back/knee/other ailment was bothering me, so I told my wife wasn't going to the lodge. She reminded me it's for that exact same reason I needed to go to the lodge (for healing).'



...It's also a place where we pray for the healing of The People...When a loved one dies, we often gather to pray in an emergency (unscheduled) Inipi...Often children will come into the lodge for one round...One of my favorite memories is exiting the Inipi in the wintertime and seeing the steam rising up off of all our bodies. Lol....Or in the summertime, exiting and lying down on the grass afterward. Completely relaxed. "

The following instructions were provided by a local tribal member. The project will be under the direction of the prison Native American chaplain who actually started under the tutorship of a member of the MMDC. Not all prisons have indigenous chaplains and prison regulations on them are very exacting as to what they can and cannot do. The volunteers going into the prison are also subject to many regulations, in addition to passing a rigorous screening procedure.

### **The Building of a Lodge Frame**

A key intention in building a lodge is “to do everything in a Good Way”. This is a sacred process and part of the preparation for ceremony and prayer.

It is a good thing that the site, materials, tools and all the persons working around the site should be smudged (often done with burning sage) before any work begins, as should all newcomers during the process.

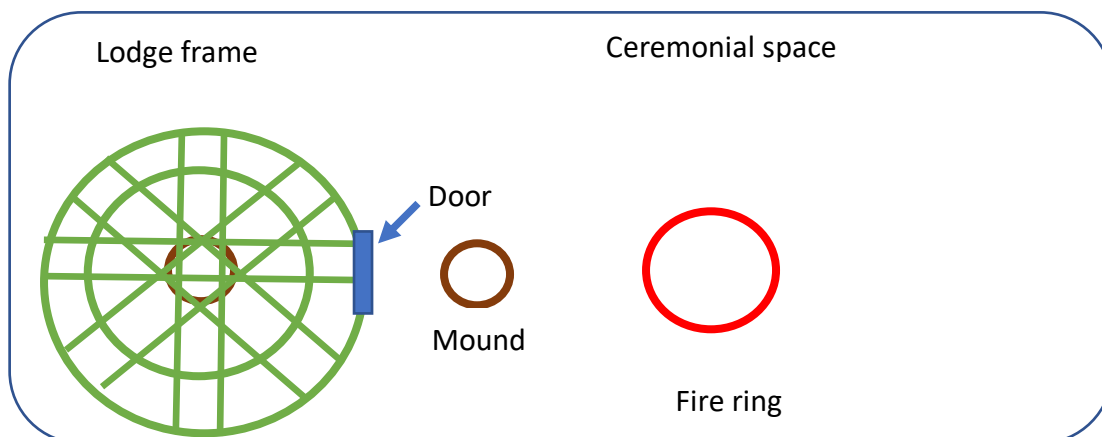
**The template:** The ceremonial area should be marked off large enough to contain all the elements of the lodge template, which include: the lodge frame, a ceremonial mound and a fire ring with room for the fire keeper to walk around it.

Within that area, a site should be marked for a dome-shaped structure to be constructed, large enough for the number of men expected (could be up to 16 feet in diameter), with a pit dug in the middle to hold the heated stones, and a doorway facing the appropriate direction for the intention of the ceremonies to be conducted.

Approximately three feet beyond the door, a ceremonial mound is made of the earth taken from the pit dug inside the lodge. On the ceremonial mound is placed the herbs used (may include herbs such as: tobacco, cedar, sweetgrass, sage), and tools used in the ceremony.

Approximately 8 feet beyond the mound, is placed the fire ring, surrounded by a circle of stones.

### **Template – 16 pole lodge**



**Materials:** The structure may be constructed of materials at hand, although organic materials are to be preferred at all times. Saplings--willow, hardwood, or bamboo all work well, provided they are taken in a Good Way, and are trimmed to create poles. Many lodge frames are made with 16 poles; they are dug 6-8 inches into the ground. Each pole is set in the earth and then bent over to connect with the pole across the circle. They are bent low enough so that a man could not stand up within the lodge, and tied with an organic material such as sisal twine. Once all the poles are set, horizontal rings are then lashed onto the structure, to assist in holding up the covering materials.

The completed structure may be covered with materials at hand although, again, organics work best. Blankets, canvas tarps, and carpets all work well, and should be placed on the frame in a way so as to not allow any light into the lodge. When construction is finished, a door blanket is placed over the opening. The door should be fashioned separately, hung with blankets, and low enough so that a man cannot walk upright through it. The door should be easily opened and closed, however, when closed, it should not allow any light into the lodge.

The floor may be earth or grass or covered with hay or carpet, which needs may change based on the season and outside temperature. The number of stones to be used is at the discretion of the ceremony leader, and may vary by season. 28 stones may be a representative number to heat in the fire, which may take 2 hours. Metamorphic and igneous stones, found on the surface, or old field stones make good candidates. Rocks can be purchased if none can be found locally. Avoid stones that have been underwater or in a damp place.

**Other Tools for Lodge Construction and Ceremony:** The holes in the earth (for lodge poles) can be made with a breaker bar or another steel implement such as a commercial tent peg and sledge hammer. A steel shovel and/or a pitchfork for working the fire, and carrying the heated rocks from the fire ring into the lodge. Deer antlers or a forked stick for maneuvering the heated rocks once they are inside the lodge.

### *Newsletter*

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

### *June Birthdays &*

#### *Celebrations*

02 - Rita  
08 - Pastor Matthias  
09 - Winnie  
19 - Mary M.  
♥ 29 - Tom and Mary  
30 - Nona

*Now revealing our maskless Smiles, Smiles, Smiles*

(answers to challenge from last month)



**Jill**



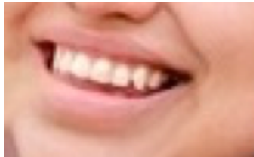
**Sandy W.**



**Sasha**



**Bob**



**Jaime**



**Karen**



**Jim**



**Susan**



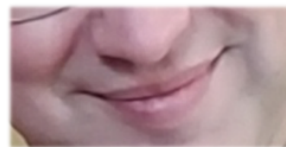
**Joanne**



**Stefan**



**Shannon**



**Eric J.**



**Pastor Matthias**



**Joy**



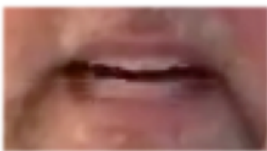
**Philip**



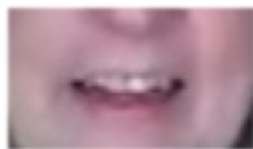
**Phyllis A.**



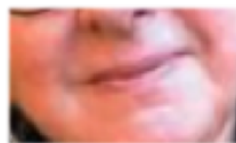
**Mary B**



**Tom M.**



**Mary M.**



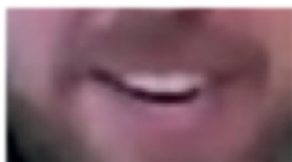
**Maria**



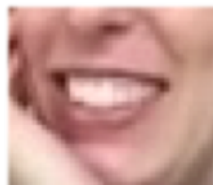
**Phyllis C.**



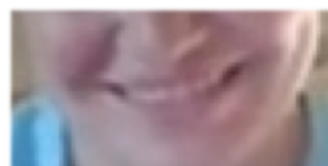
**Wayne**



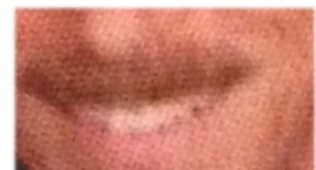
**Sebastian**



**Sarah**



**Nona**



**Curt**



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  
[starting June 11, 9:30 a.m.]  
<https://www.facebook.com/cherokeeparkchurch/live>  
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651-227-4275  
[cpuc@usfamily.net](mailto:cpuc@usfamily.net)  
[cherokeeparkunited.org](http://cherokeeparkunited.org)

*If you want to go fast, go alone.  
If you want to go far, go together.*

African Proverb