



The bubble blessing church



## 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 September 2023



### *Loaves and Fishes*

What to do to combat hunger, for people who do not have enough resources to feed themselves? Some people might say we need to **pray** for those. Others say we need to **vote** in leaders who will bring about social programs so that people can earn enough to feed themselves. Both good ideas.

**However first we need to FEED the hungry**, as that hunger is dangerous and debilitating and the other options might take awhile. We help the village around us do this six times a year on the first Thursday of odd-numbered months.

Cherokee Park will be responsible for Loaves and Fishes service and clean-up on **Thursday, September 7**, beginning about 3:30. The need for food has been great, and may increase even more as some people have lost their food stamp benefits. Our crew may be short-handed because several regular volunteers will be unable to serve that day. We need new volunteers or folks who have not served for a while to step forward. The job always has gotten done, but fewer volunteers means harder and longer work for those who do help. Please volunteer for either the first shift, 3:30 to 5 pm, or the second shift from 5 to about 6:30. Please email Wayne if you would like to volunteer.

### *Seasonal Steering Teams*

Our Garden Ministry year will soon turn to the “Harvest” season covering the months of October, November and December. Upcoming plans will be shared.

Meanwhile the current team continues with the monthly themed potluck fellowship hours. On Sunday, September 17 you are invited to bring something that features **Minnesota grown** or produced ingredients. Let's highlight this peak season for many garden items and the variety of foods that abound within our state. Wild rice? Tomatoes? Squash? What will it be...?





## *Sweat Lodge construction at Benner State Prison, Pennsylvania*

Our efforts to build this lodge, after a law suit by inmate Running River forced the issue, is again underway. The planning had been stalled several times by the prison, and is now finally scheduled for this Fall, October 5, 6, & 7. Traveling to the prison will be Pastor Matthias, Lon and Joy, 3-4 native American friends from Minnesota, and other people from Pittsburgh. Funds for this lodge total up to \$10 K and were raised by donations from inmates, donations from members of CPUC, and a GoFundMe effort organized by Pastor Matthias.

Some of the elements of construction will last several years and others will need replenishing in years to come. (i.e. fire wood, rocks.)

In addition to saplings, rocks, rock handling shovels, water containers, and firewood, other ritual prayer elements are required. One is a star quilt for the inside covering of the roof, created just for this lodge, pictured here.

## *Sign Up to Help with the Mendota Mdewakanton Dakota Tribal Community*

### *Wacipi Feast*

We are working on plans for offering this closing feast in collaboration with friends from Gloria Dei Lutheran & The Grove United Methodist Church. Volunteers needed on:

Saturday, Sep. 9 (9am-1pm) - Sunday, Sep.10 (1-4 pm) - Monday, Sep. 11 (9:30-11 am)

Plus we need many dozens of chocolate chip cookies, bags of shredded coleslaw, and monetary offerings to support the supplies and foodstuffs we need to purchase.

Please consider how you can volunteer to help during any of these time frames and show up for our MMDTC neighbors. For questions, talk with Pastor Matthias or Maria. Sign up here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C45AFA72AA1FFC16-powwow2>



## *At the August meeting the Council....*

...received the **Pastor's report**; in addition to the usual duties required each week, he helped at the church booth at West St. Paul Pride Day in July which was a great source of service referrals he could amass and use in the case of people needing help from Women's Shelters, Youth Shelters, etc.



...reviewed and approved a new contract with Loffler to replace our copier with a newer model and reduce the contracted number of black and white copies while increasing the number of color copies, which ended up with a net reduction in monthly charges.

...tabled the discussion of future offerings for the **Children's Faith Formation** programs until next month when hopefully all the personal contacts with our families with children, have been completed.

...shared opinions on how the new ministry model using **seasonal steering teams** is working out, including: it has fostered a greater sense of ownership and community; it especially works well for introverts as well as extroverts; people appreciated the short commitment of three months vs three years, and appreciated being able to offer "what I want to do, not just what I should do." People show up with fresh energy, it is "goodness", it mixes things up.

"Pain points" were that the team meetings of the four seasons overlapped creating more work for the Lay Ministry team leaders; some good things will see their ends; the Lay Ministry may need some help in the future recruiting team members; the teams do not cover overall strategizing that require more forethought for areas such as Property Management, Finance, Faith Formation so those need to be covered in addition through some other arrangements or efforts. **Kudos was given to Jill** for all the paperwork and document preparation she does which is needed to lead the teams into their desired activities.

...voted to add a small line item next year for **funds available to the teams**. Will consider going to three rather than four seasonal teams next year.

...discussed **website review and updates** as one new visitor arrived late for services having only read the first line regarding worship services listed online. General consensus is to re-order that listing so the summer time is always listed first as that time is an earlier start time. A few people are needed to work on this occasionally, who are comfortable working on websites. Pastor Matthias offered to convene a group to do a quarterly website review, and Deborah offered to be on that group.

...**Kudos to Diane and Property Management** for a recent sprucing up/thinning out of our shrubs and trees around the property so we don't have to hack our way through the jungle to enter.

...**CHANGED the council monthly meeting day** to be the THIRD Tuesday of the month.

...Next month's meeting September 19, is also **National Pirates Day**, so we are promised Pastor Matthias' favorite pirate joke. All are welcome to bring more!! September 19.

Ahoy matey!

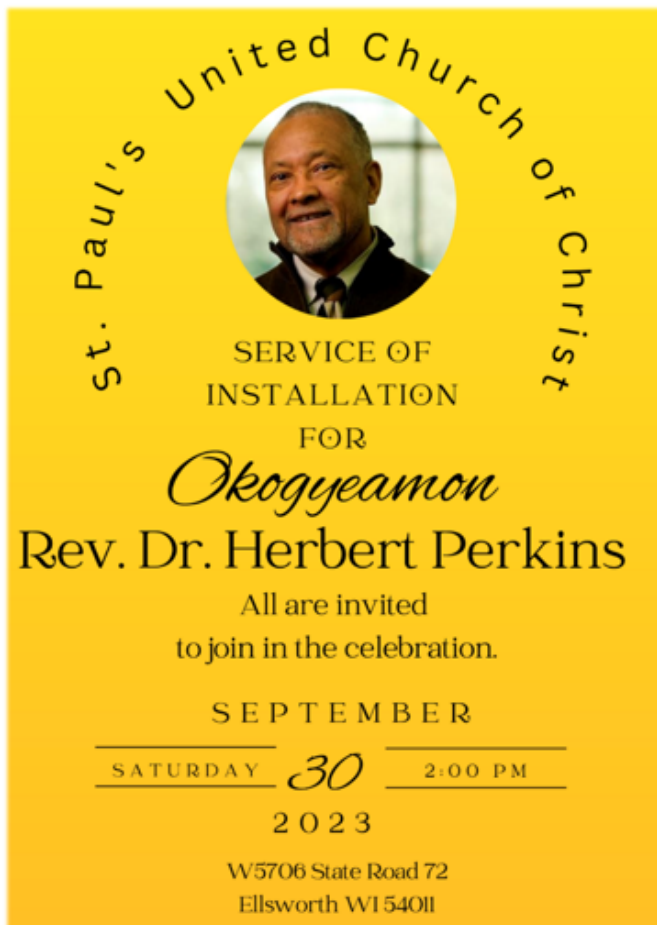
(cont'd)



...Meetings are always open to anyone, and especially easy to attend via Zoom.

...Carly shared a **special moment** she witnessed as a regular provider of care for those children at church who choose to be in the Peace Room area while still seeing and hearing what is going on during services. It was a (first Sunday) Communion Sunday, and a new mom and child were in attendance as the child told her mom she wanted to come to church. As is our philosophy, both were welcome to communion and gently reassured by Carly that this was fine without anyone having signed any membership or received any instructions. So we were a part of this young child's First Communion, such a sacred moment, done in the context, that all that is needed is a welcoming church family. We are so blessed.

*All Are Invited to the Installation of long-time CPUC member Okogyeamon  
as pastor at St. Paul's in Ellsworth, WI  
Saturday September 30*



If you would like to join in our small choir to lead songs please contact Karen or Sandy W. by Sunday, September 3. A short rehearsal will be planned before the event.

Location of the church can be somewhat complicated so Karen is writing up directions for anyone who would like them.

## *From Pastor Matthias*

Dear CPUC,

There is a steady hum in the background as I write this. The window air conditioning unit has been on since I arrived at 8:30 a.m. this morning. The outside temperature was already in the low 80s. There is a heat advisory and parts of Minnesota are expected to see triple digit temperatures today.



At times this summer, we have also endured air quality warnings as particulates from Canadian wildfires blew across our state and much of the U.S., making it potentially hazardous to venture outside unmasked.

There is no denying that our planet is in dire straits. We are living through climate crises that will only get worse. Meanwhile, new gas and oil pipelines continue to be planned for, approved, and built. The impacts of climate change affect all of us, but most of the hardship and suffering will land on the shoulders of the most historically exploited and marginalized and the poor around the globe.

Yesterday, I stopped at Target to pick up one quick thing. As I entered the parking lot, I saw a man sitting in the shade of a tree there. My dashboard thermometer read 93F. I couldn't help but think of Jesus' words that whoever gives even a cold cup of water to one of the marginalized will have the reward of a prophet (Mt. 10:40-42). Elsewhere, Jesus tells the disciples that whatever they do for the "least of these my siblings" they do unto him (Mt. 25) and instructs them to feed the crowds rather than sending them away.

Last minute at the check out, I grabbed a bottle of water from the cooler and handed it to the man on my way out of the parking lot. I was relieved to see he had a big cup of ice and gallon jug of water too. One cold cup of water will not stop climate change. That will take all of us calling for change together and being willing to adjust our collective global lifestyles.

However, over and over, Jesus shows up to us in the guise of the stranger, the friend, the enemy, reminds us that no act of kindness is wasted or lost, but all held by Christ who lives in all of us and in the aching earth.

Yours on the journey,  
Pastor Matthias



### *Editor's note:*

I have not planted anything except one flower pot for many years, but this year thought I could manage one pepper plant, some parsley and dill. However my dill turned out to be carrots, which I am told, are not really thriving under that soil.



*Foods provided at the August toothpick party fellowship met with great approval  
Mmmmmm, so good!*



### *September Birthdays & Celebrations*

02 - Lynne  
06 - Phyllis C.  
07 - Gina  
♥ 10 - Kelly & Susan  
18 - Nora  
26 - Jayden  
26 - Ellen  
28 - Mike B.  
29 - Susan  
30 - Joanne

*(This list was compiled very informally; please let editor know if there are others that we could add.)*

### *Newsletter*

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





*Congratulations and  
many future blessings to  
Eric and Mandy  
who were married in August.*





*Worship always ends with Bubble Blessings*



## *Reparations in action: what is being done locally and elsewhere*

**Metropolitan State University Actions** - Contributing to Restoration through:  
Scholarship/stipend/grant for students who are attending college on their ancestral lands. -  
Offering the use of our facilities without cost to Native & Indigenous groups - Building a  
deeply reciprocal relationship with Wakáŋ Tipi Center, an east side Saint Paul Native-led non-  
profit - Support and grow Metro's American Indian Advisory Council, the Native Circle space,  
and student organization VOICES. - • Increase representation of American Indian employees  
within the university- Strengthening Relations with Minnesota's Tribal Colleges through:  
Creation of articulation agreements with Minnesota's four tribal colleges -Ongoing discussions  
with tribal college presidents about how we could deliver baccalaureate education for their  
students and communities

**Georgetown University, Washington D.C.:** issues scholarships to modern-day descendants  
of the 272 slaves the school sold in 1838. The school also has proposed spending \$400,000 a year  
on school, health and other community efforts to atone for its slave history.

**The State of California** has created a task force calling for apologies and *proposing* financial  
reparations to descendants of slavery who suffered land theft and other injustices, amounting to  
billions of dollars in spending if approved.

**Sports Team Effort:** In April 2023, the **NHL Pittsburgh Penguins restored for use 1.5 A** to the  
Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church as 70 years ago it was forced by the city to give up  
its sanctuary for a fraction of the land value, for an urban renewal project. This wiped out the  
heart of an African American neighborhood known as the Hill District, demolishing about 1300  
buildings across 95 acres, displacing over 8,000 people, 400 businesses and houses of worship,  
(except for one mostly white Catholic church.)

*And relating to the above:*

The **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America leaders** learned that one of its members  
was the racist killer who massacred nine attendees of a Bible study at Mother Emanuel AME  
Church in Charleston, South Carolina, in 2015. As one attempt at Reparations they **rose in  
support** of the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church (preceding paragraph) to reclaim its  
home. The bishop of the Southwestern PA Synod stated, "As we learned more about white  
privilege and all of that reality in our country, it was our responsibility to **use that privilege** in  
any possible way **to accompany** what the AME church was seeking in terms of **reparations.**"

**"CanRenew" money to communities harmed by marijuana prohibition:** Starting in fiscal  
year 2026, this Minnesota grant program, funded by tax revenue from cannabis sales, , will award  
\$15 million a year to eligible organizations in communities that have high concentrations of people  
who were convicted for a marijuana offense or had family members who were convicted.  
Communities with large veteran populations, high poverty rates or that have been determined to  
have "experienced a disproportionately large amount of cannabis enforcement" will also be  
eligible for the funding. "This is a form of reparation," said state Sen. Lindsey Port, DFL-Burnsville,

who sponsored the marijuana bill. "Direct harm has been done to communities by prohibition and by the state, and it is our responsibility to undo that harm. This is really our first major investment in doing that, and it should have the same kind of lasting effects that, unfortunately, the war on drugs has had on communities of color."

***Buying land back:* MPR Interview with Chris Stainbrook,  
president of the Indian land Tenure Foundation**

CHRIS: Well, I think-- there's a huge amount of land that was promised through treaties and executive orders, 90 million acres across the country, approximately, oh, 2.1 million acres in Minnesota. And those lands were lost. To get the land back inside the reservation boundaries is of utmost importance just from the tribe being the tribe and native nations. So it's really-- to get that land back is the important piece and the cultural sites off of those reservations that are out in the public domain. Those hold special religious and cultural values to Indian people, and that's important just to maintain our culture with.

And eventually, the church and congregation at Holy Trinity came through with a sizable gift, which then caused us to look at what have we provided that could be the vehicle for other smaller gifts from some of the smaller groups that had a land acknowledgment statement but didn't see themselves being able to buy and return land. Could we have a fund, then, that set up and they could contribute to it and we would purchase land through that fund?

INTERVIEWER: So Chris, when you look at a big map of the United States and you're starting to buy up some of this land, what's, say, the goal in the next, I don't know, 5-10 years?

CHRIS: Well, we're looking at the full 90-million acres that are inside the reservation boundaries across the country that were lost through the allotment process. We've got a 150-year mission statement from our staff's perspective. We've bought back one just right around 150,000 acres, and while that doesn't sound like very much when you're shooting for 90 million, our abilities, our capabilities have been growing the last 20 years. And so we're doing more purchases now than we had been doing, say, five years ago.

INTERVIEWER: Mmm, OK, I understand. So can I ask you about maybe some of the wealthier nations, tribal nations, that are coming to mind, say, in Minnesota? Can-- would you help them? Are they on their own? Are you mostly helping smaller tribal nations?

CHRIS: Well, some of them-- some of the wealthier ones, we-- obviously, they don't need our financing to do some of their purchases, and so we're kind of midrange size. And location is a big thing, so where you don't have gaming tribes that are doing well, you can-- we end up financing a number of purchases for those tribes. (*sahanjournal.com - a nonprofit digital newsroom dedicated to reporting for immigrants and communities of color in Minnesota*)

[https://www.mprnews.org/episode/2023/01/30/are-words-enough-foundation-goes-beyond-land-acknowledgements?fbclid=IwAR28\\_p5D\\_z7CKdN5CA\\_TJQPJJoRbHsAywF86wpzx1clUuBWaudqye6mPKn8](https://www.mprnews.org/episode/2023/01/30/are-words-enough-foundation-goes-beyond-land-acknowledgements?fbclid=IwAR28_p5D_z7CKdN5CA_TJQPJJoRbHsAywF86wpzx1clUuBWaudqye6mPKn8)



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  
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*"Called to"  
does not mean  
"want to."*