



cold outside - warm inside

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 ~ February 2025

Known MPLS Choir Meal

February 3, Monday evening

CPUC is signed up to prepare and bring a meal for *Known MPLS*, an audition-based youth Gospel choir. Their rehearsals run Monday nights from 6 - 8 pm with many singers arriving by bus straight from afterschool activities. They take a dinner break around 7 pm and that's when we share our gifts.

Food donations and warm welcomers are needed to provide a space of loving hearts for these 35+ young women and men, the leaders and creators of the future. We will arrange car pools for our volunteers.



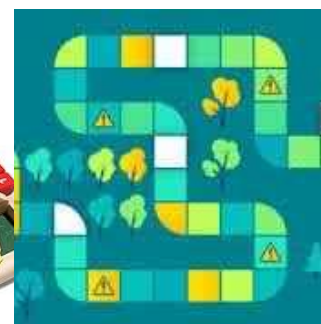
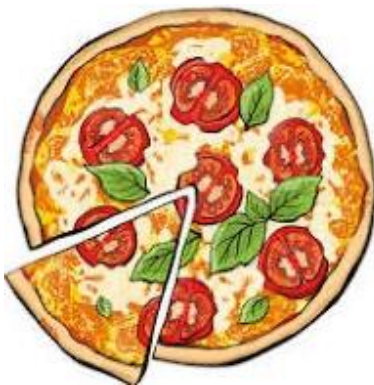
GAME NIGHT!!

February 8, Saturday, from 5-8 pm

We will start with a meal of pizza, salads and treats. Games will be set up at tables for all ages; feel free to bring your own if you have a favorite. A movie will be set up in the children's room with blankets and pillows for those not wanting to play games.

A sign-up sheet is being passed during worship and in fellowship hall.

Coordinator: Diane



Dear Friends,

Like many of you, I have been dispirited and anxious watching the rapid deluge of executive orders and declarations from the new President and his administration. There is no cure-all for this cocktail of fear, anger, and despair.

I want to share with you two of the most helpful suggestions I have come across recently, in hopes that they might help you as well.



First, from the artist and activist who posts under the handle “Bad Ass Cross-Stitch,” is that we should practice radical acceptance. Yes, this is happening here and now. Yes, I feel distraught and full of rage and hopeless and deeply sad. Radically accepting the situation and our own feelings can help step back from feeling mired in them. It can help move us to the “so now what?” phase.

She goes on to suggest that posting your outrage, your “how could they!,” and performing your disapproval online will wear you out and make no meaningful change. Instead, find organizations already doing essential work, educate yourself, and share resources and information. For instance, get reliable information about immigrant rights from MIRAC, Immigration Law Center of MN, or ACLU of MN and share them or find other ways to support organizations doing the work now.

The second suggestion comes from the slim, but essential, volume *On Tyranny* by Timothy Snyder. Immerse yourself in good books and try to formulate things in your own words. One of the ways that tyrants seek to exert control is through repetition of the same phrases that limit language and narratives to fit their purposes. By reading we soak ourselves in other words and phrases, different stories, alternate worlds, and frames. It strengthens our empathy as well as our ability to think for ourselves and to think differently.

While this is not how I would usually describe what we do in worship on Sundays, it is a piece of it. We gather around stories of Jesus, prophets, forebears in faith. We hear language that sometimes sounds dated to our ears. We grapple with moral questions and hear foundational stories that shape our movement in the world.

Keep the faith. Take care of yourself. Check in on each other.
God is still speaking.

Pastor Matthias

Notes from the January Council Meeting...



Highlights include -

- Pastor Matthias reported on his ministry over the last month. He spent time on the usual demands of being pastor and duties of his job. The last month was busy with Christmas and helping the Harvest Seasonal Steering Team wrap up and the Renewing SST begin their seasons. The weekend of January 18 – 20 included participating in the People’s March, MLK Jr. Sunday worship with Clark Grace UCC, and meeting with the Sabbatical Planning Team.
- The Council set Communion dates for 2025, approved Council meetings for the 3rd Tuesday of each month (with no meeting in July) and volunteered for commitments to CPUC and our wider denominations this year. They approved the list of people serving in special roles on the Finance Team, including the counters.
- The Council approved a request from Rainbow Dancer (an inmate at Benner State Prison in Pennsylvania) to belong to the family of faith at Cherokee Park United. Susan Strebig wrote to the Council and shared Rainbow Dancer’s letter of inquiry. The Council and Pastor Matthias will send him a certificate and letter affirming his special relationship to CPUC. The Council will consider other ways for CPUC to connect with Rainbow Dancer in the future.
- The Council reviewed and approved CPUC’s giving to designated missions in 2024. The Council will look at the designated missions and amounts later in 2025 to consider changes for future years.
- Lynne, church accountant, reported CPUC ended 2024 \$16,000 above the projected budget. Hooray!
- The Council prayed as Pastor Matthias named every known person presently connected to CPUC. The Council ends their January meeting this way in recent years.
- The next Council meeting is scheduled for February 18, 2025.

Cherokee Park United Church Council 2025

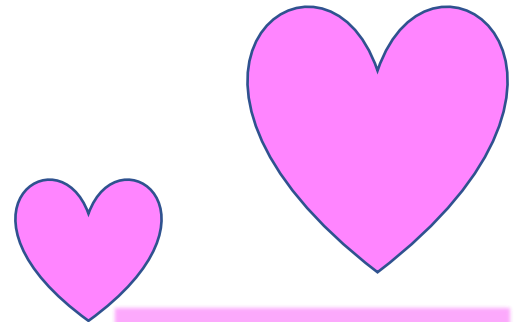
Lynne, Kathy B., Sandy D., Sebastian, Barb,
Jill, Maria, Tom M. Jim S., Pastor Matthias

Peoples' March, January 18, 2025

(28° below zero wind chill)

Pastor Matthias, Alicia Philip, Jackie, Glen

Eight years ago, over 100,000 Minnesotans marched to the State Capitol to defend women's rights, immigrants' rights, queer rights, and justice for all. Now, with our freedoms facing new threats under an administration rooted in repression and divisiveness, it was time to come together once more.



*February Birthdays
and Celebrations*

- 13 - Eric J.
- 19 - Wayne
(Happy 80th!!)
- 26 - Jackie

This new proposed logo for our church family is part of the launch of our re-designing website efforts. The rainbow is unmistakable, but it may take a minute to realize that these are also indicative of our signature bubbles ending our worship services. Even in the darkest of times, we are uplifted by rainbow friends and shimmering orbs filled with the breath of the spirit.



Keeping warm

If you are checking our Cherokee Park United Church Members and Friends Facebook page, you will see this photo of a sweater, along with Sasha's comments. Even though she moved to New York she is still involved here, and stops in whenever she is visiting relatives. She even took suitcases of items back with her to give to Franky, a young man released from prison, who was living here for a number of months but moved back to Brooklyn.

Sasha says: "I finished the Icelandic sweater started by Jan Howe, [who passed away in 2022], given to Kathy B. for safekeeping. Jan had knit up to the brown zigzags and I finished it. Would anyone like a very warm sweater? Kaia will bring it back to MN for you." And Jill, our resident parodyist/punstress remarks " Another way our faith community is 'knit' together!"



2025 Seasonal Steering Team planning

Your input is invited for future considerations: How we can be supportive of our immigrant neighbors and others who might be needing document support and other services? ...What will our Lenten observance look like? Perhaps we will gather on Wednesday evenings for a simple meal and guided conversation. ...What resources are available to our children and youth to guide them through Lent? ...Might we commit ourselves to Lenten earth care commitments as a witness to the need to heal and preserve the earth for future generations? ...We have honored Oscar Romero in worship for many years now; are there other modern martyrs we might also lift up?



Member News

Congratulations to sister Sandy D. on her retirement from full time work. She has been, most recently, a hospital chaplain for Legacy HealthEast and Fairview, as well as at clinical settings at Bethesda, St. Joseph, St. John, and Woodwinds hospitals. As an ordained minister she has many competencies and experiences to add anywhere she is working or volunteering, and she does so with her "Sandy Smile", which now has also been inherited by her daughter Jaime!! She will continue ministry in a casual chaplain capacity. And along with other ministers in our church family, she will be providing pastoral care and leading worship services over the summer-fall six months when Pastor Matthias is on sabbatical leave (authorized every six years of a pastor's congregational ministry.) Congratulations to Sandy.

Request for membership at CPUC

by Susan

Possibly our most unusual request for membership came in a five-page letter from an inmate at a Pennsylvania State Prison. Rainbow Dancer Thunderbird, friend of Running River, experienced how our church efforts made possible the building of the inipi (sweatlodge) there; furthermore, I have been sending him pages from our newsletter when there might be articles of interest to him.

He asked that he and others might become members, or at least a "relative" of our community. He writes: "(I and) many other (native) brothers here also come from Christian or other backgrounds, and really respect and admire what CPUC is doing and would like to be a part of the goodness your church is doing for the (native) People. So would you please consider this (request). Most humans feel a need to belong....Prison can make one a very cold person...I don't love many things, especially people...because all those people who said they loved me so much when I was out there, have taken it back and left me all alone!"

He also asked if he could write something for future newsletters. He knows that I already did share his writing in a previous newsletter, as I always include some thought from either an author, activist, or church members including children. (See below) He was designated as a chief in his tribe, but in prison he is merely a number. He yearns to have a voice. As do all inmates.

The council voted to extend our welcome.

we are all related

Maku Philip Rainbow Dancer Thunderbird speaks out from the belly of the beast
[Pennsylvania State Correctional Institution]

HOLD'N ON

Hold'n on to my faith
Hold'n on to my salvation
Hold'n on to my savior
Hold'n on to my brothers & sisters
Still hold'n on.

CONVERGENCE

by Running River 2022

This thank you gift hangs in our sanctuary, showing the interweaving of Trinity and Medicine Wheel symbols, representing the beauty of life when peoples of differing cultures and backgrounds work together to bring about the world meant by the Creator - the peace and harmony of all people and nature. Mitakuye Oyasin



Cherokee Park United Church
United Church of Christ/Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
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Sunday Worship 10:15 a.m. online and in person
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