



## **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 2026***

*This newsletter is also posted on our website; for safety and privacy, last names and personal contact information are omitted there. That version is also sent, upon request, to various native inmates in Pennsylvania who greatly appreciate our attention, respect, and our work for rights to their spiritual practices.*

## *CPUC annual meeting*

### **February 8, Sunday**

The agenda at this meeting, held immediately after worship, includes receiving the proposed church budget and electing new Lay Ministry members.

## *Join us for PIZZA & GAME NIGHT!*

### **February 21, Saturday, 5 - 8 pm**

We will start with a meal of pizza, salads, and desserts. Pizza will be provided. A sign-up sheet is available at church. Your help with set-up, clean-up or sharing a salad or dessert is needed.

Games will be available for all ages. You're invited to bring your favorite to play or share. A movie will be set up in the children's room for those not wanting to play games.



Please contact Jill by February 20<sup>th</sup> if you are not able to sign-up at church. Thank you for being a part of this enjoyable evening together!

## *Help us stay connected! - CPUC e-directory updates*

If you are listed in the 2025 E-Directory, you will receive an email in early February asking for any updates to your contact information. No need to be an "official" member; if you are with us often and consider us your church home, you may also be included. Please send the contact information you wish to include – name(s), address, email, cell phone, home phone – to Jill by February 28, 2026. You may also include any photo of yourself/family. (It will be cropped to a small image.)

This directory is only sent to those already included in our weekly emailed updates. (Let us know also if you are not receiving these Thursday eblasts and we can get you on that list.). We hope to get a new edition out to you in March.

## Loaves & Fishes

Our next scheduled work session will be on **March 5**. We did not serve in January, as Thursday landed on January 1. This does not mean we can't volunteer at St. Matt's on other days in February; they almost always can use more help and we wouldn't want to get out of practice or forget the location of St. Matt's!

## Known MPLS Dinner!

### February 23, Monday evening

CPUC will again be serving our monthly meal for *Known MPLS*, an audition-based Gospel choir of youth of color from North Minneapolis.

If you'd like to be a part of the team you can help out by cooking/ baking or donating funds/items. You can also volunteer to help serve on-site.



Signup during fellowship time or talk to Alicia or Pastor Matthias. Many thanks to all who made the meal on January 26th a success!

## The Palm Sunday Path (not your ordinary Palm Sunday)

CPUC will join hundreds of other faith communities in Minnesota and beyond in a massive Palm Sunday (March 29) parade/march reminding people what Jesus' life and message is. Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, a symbol of a just, humble leader, healed the sick, fed the hungry, and welcomed the stranger. Roman authorities entered Jerusalem at the same time to show the power of the Roman Empire and to control this freedom festival. Jesus provoked and drew a contrast. We will too.

The clergy coalition of ISAIAH, a grassroots MN social justice organization, is providing leadership and training to galvanize an effective response to our current democracy crisis. We will be present at state caucuses and community meetings. We will walk to the state capital Palm Sunday afternoon. People and institutions of faith across the country will lead a national Prophetic Faith Action on July 3, 2026 in Philadelphia. Courageous demonstrations must be paired with disciplined, organized power rooted in lasting institutions. The most decisive period is the first 18 months after an authoritarian tries to consolidate power.



## A Message from Pastor Matthias



Dear CPUC,

At the meeting where several hundred clergy planned the action at MSP airport, one of the organizers said: “There is a risk to acting, but there is a greater risk to not acting.”

We have seen the risks of acting to love our neighbors. Renee Good and Alex Pretti were both killed by ICE for peacefully documenting ICE terror and standing up for their neighbors. Many others have been tear-gassed, pepper-sprayed, arrested and injured. There are risks of exhaustion to taking action, or becoming a target simply for affirming your belief that all human beings must be treated with dignity.

Yet the risks of not acting are greater. There are the big picture risks: we could all just give up, stopping raising our voices, turn away from the atrocities our immigrant neighbors are facing, stop the mutual aid and documenting ICE and school patrols, and let authoritarianism, violence, and lies have their way. That is a pragmatic, big picture risk of us not acting.

But beyond that, the risk of not acting is that we lose our humanity. We lose a grasp on what matters the most. We risk betraying the Gospel of Christ and denying God’s call to love, which stems from God’s inexhaustible love for us.

At this point, you have likely figured out how you are feeling called to help in this moment. (If you need help discerning or finding direction, let me know!). We cannot all do everything, but each of us can do something.

My word to you all this month is to keep going. Tend to your body with rest and care when needed. Weep if you need to weep. Trust that your contributions are needed and meaningful. It can be easy to doubt we are doing enough given the enormity of the terror before us. Yet each of these acts of courage and care is an essential piece of our collective strength. I am so proud to minister among you all; I see your goodness and the love of God shining through you.

Christ stands with the oppressed, and so do we.

Yours,  
Pastor Matthias

### *Notes from the January Council Meeting...*

- 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, both at CPUC and the Presbytery. He was busy with Advent, Christmas Eve, Epiphany services and helping the transition to the Renewing Seasonal Steering Team. He helped plan and participated in the MLK Jr. Sunday worship with Clark Grace UCC. Pastor Matthias continues to put together a new members class. He is also trying to gather, sift, and share information about the presence of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in our area.
- The Council set Communion dates for 2026, approved Council meetings for the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 (Sunday financial contribution) counters.
- The Council discussed our response to the present moment with ICE in our neighborhood. The Council agreed to post signs on the door/lawn asking federal agents without a judicial warrant to stay out of our building. Pastor reminded us that his office is a “private” space where people can shelter safely. A motion passed affirming care for our immigrant neighbors and CPUC’s supportive efforts as a faith community and as individuals.
- The Council approved hiring Climate Makers to clean our boilers. Their cost estimate is \$2,300 with a rebate from Xcel Energy of \$500 when complete. Thanks to Kelly who surfaced the bids for this job.
- The Council approved the request of a West Side neighbor to hold a meeting at CPUC. The reason was to share resources with others about present concerns. The neighbor later told Pastor information was getting out in other ways so our building was not needed.
- The Council received a report on the Presbytery’s recent meeting and action to graciously separate with Church of All Nations of Columbia Heights, at their request.

- The “Glory to God” hymnals arrived! They were backordered for many months. We’ll start using them in worship soon.
- Pastor reported the International Workers of the World are only meeting occasionally at CPUC on Saturday mornings.
- Pastor recently signed a letter supporting the scheduling of more sweat lodge ceremonies for incarcerated Native people pursuing their religious rights and helping those recently released from state prisons in Pennsylvania. CPUC is the fiscal agent for the present time.
- CPUC is hiring a person to shovel snow on an “as needed” basis this year. The snow must exceed two inches for removal.
- Karen will be honored for her longtime efforts as Financial Secretary for CPUC during worship on January 25<sup>th</sup>.
- The process to hire a part-time administrative assistant will start as time permits in the coming months.
- The Property Management Teams is gathering quotes for repairs to the northside roof and the bell tower. Stay tuned!
- The Council prayed as Pastor Matthias held a list of every known person presently connected to CPUC. The Council ends their January meeting with everyone’s name in recent years.
- The next Council meeting is scheduled for February 17, 2026.



Thanking Karen for her years of dedicated service as financial secretary.

If you would like to know more about any of these items in detail, the Council members would be glad to talk with you. The Council members are Sebastian, Kathy, Maria, Sandy D., Lynne, Kay and Jill.



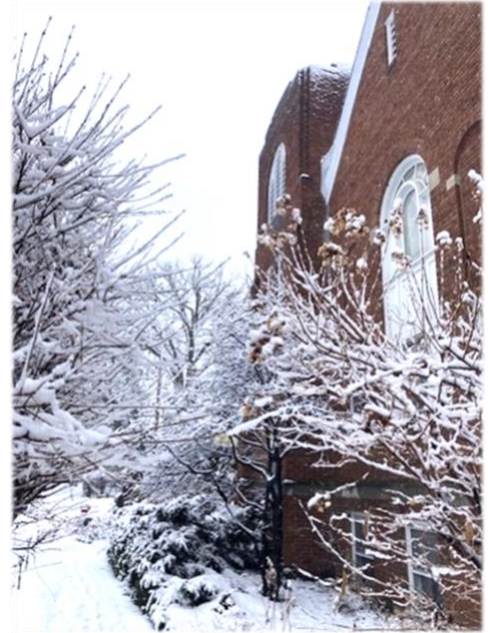
Installing newest council members Kay and Jill

## Our Land Is Our Garden

The weather outside is so brutal,  
Hope for new warmth does seem futile.  
Yet we've lived through such storms in the past,  
So take faith that this cold will not last.

We live in a land with four seasons.  
To appreciate each there are reasons.  
And when winter storms are still looming,  
We do know that spring will come blooming.

The land is alive with its power.  
The garden in summer will flower  
In abundance, the good crops will grow  
With their blessings for all in each row.



BREAKING: ICE breaks down an old man's door, put a gun to his daughter-in-law's head... See more

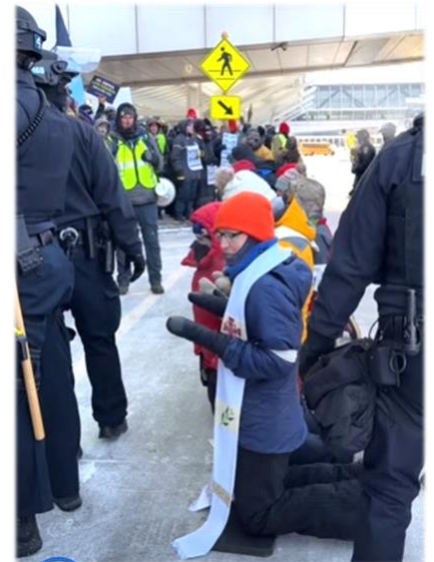


This year has been dark and alarming:  
Politicians are so busy harming  
The folks they're supposed to be leading,  
Starving out those who really need feeding.

Can we trust that the times will be turning  
To the peace for which we are yearning?  
Can we replace those leaders in greed  
With others who serve those in need?

As we tend to our gardens each year now,  
Let our energies weed out our fear now.  
As we love and believe in our land,  
Let us plant so that justice can stand,  
For the power remains in our hand.

*Pat  
December 2025*



100 clergy people arrested for kneeling in road to prevent ice vehicles from taking kidnapped citizens to airport

## February – Black History Month

[A bit of U.S. history not found in most history books, as most approved, widely used, history books were written by people most often white, and most often, males.]

### Florence Beatrice (nee Smith) Price

American classical composer, pianist, organist and music teacher, Price was born in 1887 in Little Rock, Arkansas, one of three children. Her father was the only African-American dentist in the city, and her mother was a music teacher. Despite racial issues of the era, her family was well respected and did well within their community. She gave her first piano performance at the age of four and had her first composition published at the age of 11.



At age 14 she graduated high school as valedictorian of her class and then enrolled in the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, majoring in organ and piano teaching. Initially, she passed as Mexican to avoid racial discrimination against African Americans, listing her hometown as "Pueblo, Mexico". She graduated in 1906 with honors, and in 1910 became the head of the music department of what is now Clark Atlanta University, a historically Black college. In 1912, she married Thomas J. Price, a lawyer. She gave up her teaching position and moved back to Little Rock, where he had his practice and they had two daughters. She could not find work in the by-now racially segregated town.

After a series of racial incidents in Little Rock they moved north to Chicago to escape Jim Crow conditions. According to her daughter, Florence really wanted to be a doctor but felt the difficulties of becoming a woman doctor at the time were too formidable. Instead, she became that even greater rarity—a woman composer of symphonies.

Price became part of the Chicago Black Renaissance, publishing four pieces for piano in 1928, and at various times enrolled at the Chicago Musical College, Chicago Teachers College, University of Chicago, and American Conservatory of Music, studying languages and liberal arts subjects as well as music. In 1931, her husband's abuse, resulted in divorce. To make ends meet for her and her daughters, she worked as an organist for silent film screenings and composed songs for radio ads under a pen name, during this time, living with friends. Her Symphony in E minor, performed by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 1933, represented a pivotal moment in American classical music, breaking the race barrier for African American composers in major symphonic venues. In 2009, a collection of her works was found in an abandoned dilapidated house on the outskirts of St. Anne, Illinois, a potent symbol of how a country can forget its cultural history. Price is noted as the first African-American woman to be recognized as a symphonic composer, and the first to have a composition played by a major orchestra. She composed over 300 works; four symphonies, four concertos, choral works, art songs, chamber music and music for solo instruments. She died in 1953.



Born in North Carolina in 1879, **Robert Lee Vann** worked his way through school, culminating with graduating law school from the University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In North Carolina, he walked 24 miles a day to grammar school, graduated valedictorian of his class, and at Virginia Union University he studied so diligently that he received a Pitt scholarship in 1903.

His ability as a level-headed orator, writer and leader soon became evident; he went through Pitt College by working in a Stockton Avenue boarding-house for two meals a day and \$2 a week. When he graduated, Law School Dean John B. Schaefer asked Lawyer J. C. Boyer to take him under wing. While studying with Boyer, Vann earned his way as a night waiter on the B. & O.

Railroad. He passed the Pennsylvania Bar Exam in 1909, making him one of the few Black attorneys in the city.

With his connections and smarts, Vann gathered investors to begin a newspaper called the *Pittsburgh Courier* in 1910. Serving as its editor and a frequent contributor, Vann grew this paper and used it to focus attention on injustices against African Americans.

In his 1914 Christmas editorial, Vann wrote that the *Courier's* goal was to “abolish every vestige of Jim Crowism in Pittsburgh.” In particular, he wrote about the unfair treatment of the African American community by the Pullman Company, and publicly supported the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the first Black labor organization in the U.S. to be recognized by the American Federation of Labor.

Another frequent topic of coverage was the struggles of steel workers, including extensive coverage of the 1919 steel workers’ strike. Vann called attention to the manufactured animosity between white striking steel workers who were unionized and Black steel workers who were forced to work because they were not allowed in the union. Vann’s writing encouraged white union leaders to welcome Black members and urged Black steel workers to recognize common cause with the striking white steel workers.

This nuanced and detailed reporting helped the *Courier* grow its circulation to a peak of 250,000 weekly, expanding to become a national newspaper with editions in Chicago, New York, Detroit, and Los Angeles, among others. The renown of the *Courier* as a newspaper from and for the Black community drew visits and engagements from well-known African Americans including Langston Hughes, W.E.B. DuBois, Jackie Robinson, Ella Fitzgerald, and Lena Horne.

As the Great Depression hit and its impacts were felt across the United States, Vann continued to use his newspaper to advocate for economic relief for African American communities and their access to New Deal programs. Robert Lee Vann’s keen analysis of the intersection of labor and race made him a pioneer in connecting the struggles for racial and economic equity. He died in 1940. The *Pittsburgh Courier* is still in print to this day.

[sources: [thecarnegielibrary.org](http://thecarnegielibrary.org), *28 days of Black history* by Nicole Cardoz]

Some compelling, often-overlooked stories of Black inventors:

- **Sarah Boone** (1892): Born into slavery, Boone became a dressmaker and patented an improved ironing board designed to make ironing sleeves and women's garments easier, featuring a narrow, curved board.
- **Dr. Charles Drew** (1940s): A surgeon who developed techniques for processing and storing blood plasma, establishing the first "blood banks". He later resigned as director of the American Red Cross blood donor service to protest the policy of separating blood by race, which he called unscientific.

- **Garrett Morgan** (1910s-1920s): Not only did he invent a life-saving safety hood for firefighters (an early gas mask), but after witnessing a carriage accident, he created the three-position traffic signal.



- **Marie Van Brittan Brown** (1966): A nurse who, concerned about safety in her neighborhood, invented the first home security system. It used a sliding camera, television monitors, and two-way microphones, forming the basis for modern CCTV systems.



- **Frederick McKinley Jones** (1930s-1940s): A self-taught engineer who invented a portable air-cooling unit for trucks, which revolutionized the transport of food and medicine during WWII.

- **Alice H. Parker**: an African American inventor famous for her patented system of central heating using natural gas. Tired of the inefficiency of fireplaces, Parker filed a patent in 1919 for a system that used natural gas that used fuel a central furnace. Her design was the first to use individually controlled ducts to distribute heat throughout a house, providing the conceptual blueprint for modern central heating. This revolutionary idea



conserved energy and paved the way for the central heating systems that are in modern-day homes. Her design was unique because it used natural gas as its fuel instead of coal or wood that had been previously used. Her invention meant that people did not have to go outside and chop or buy wood. It also decreased the risk of house or building fires. People no longer had to leave a burning fireplace on throughout the night. Parker's filing a patent was a remarkable milestone because it preceded both the Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Liberation Movement. These movements removed barriers that women of her generation faced.

- **Lewis Latimer** (1880s): Son of runaway slaves, Latimer was an engineer who drafted the patent for Alexander Graham Bell's telephone and invented a durable carbon filament that made light bulbs practical.
- **John Albert Burr** (1899): Patented an improved rotary blade lawnmower, specifically designed with traction wheels to prevent the blades from clogging with grass clippings.
- **Otis Boykin** (1950s-1960s): Inventor who patented 28 electronic devices, including an improved resistor used in early pacemakers and televisions.
- **Gladys West** is an American mathematician known for her contributions towards developing the Global Positioning System (GPS). But no one would have known this had it not been for her fellow Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority member Gwen James who discovered what she did and shared it with the world. West is a mathematician whose math skills advanced satellites, missiles, and used highly complex computer algorithms to analyze enormous amounts of data. When asked if she uses the GPS, she says she still prefers the use of a paper map.
- **Sarah E. Goode** (Folding Cabinet Bed): In 1885, Goode became the first Black woman to receive a U.S. patent. She owned a furniture store and noticed her working-class customers lived in tiny apartments without room for full-sized beds. She designed a folding cabinet bed that transformed into a fully functional roll-top desk when not in use, an early predecessor to the Murphy bed.
- **Lonnie Johnson** (The Super Soaker): While working as a NASA aerospace engineer on a new heat pump, Johnson accidentally blasted a stream of water across his bathroom when a nozzle leaked. He realized the potential for a powerful toy and used his engineering expertise to create the Super Soaker, which became one of the world's most successful toys.

These inventors often overcame significant racial barriers and lack of recognition to patented advancements that are still used today.

#### *Newsletter*

Please submit articles by the 22nd of preceding month to [susanstrebig@gmail.com](mailto:susanstrebig@gmail.com) (or contact if an extension is needed)  
 Editor: Susan  
 Proofreader: Mary  
 Collator: Kathy

#### *February Birthdays*

#### *Members and Friends*

13 - Eric J.  
 19 - Wayne  
 26 - Jackie

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

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 am, online and in person  
<https://www.facebook.com/cherokeeparkchurch/live>  
Pastor: Rev. Matthias Peterson-Brandt  
651-227-4275  
cpuc@usfamily.net  
cherokeeparkunited.org

*Maybe I pray for the impossible  
but I pray it none-the-less.*

*Maria*

*Prayers of the People, 12-28-25*