



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 ~ May 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.

Known MPLS Dinner

May 17, Monday

CPUC will be serving a meal for Known MPLS, a high school youth of color, choir, as we have been doing monthly for some time now. If you'd like to be a part of the team you can help by cooking/baking or donating funds/items and/or volunteer to help serve on-site. Signup during fellowship time or talk to Alicia or Pastor Matthias.

Many thanks to our *March team* -Jill Jackson, Lynne & Mike Bates, Jackie Rico, and Pastor Matthias. And thank you to our *April team* - Lynne & Mike Bates and Pastor Matthias for a crockpot of homemade cooking, Karen and Jim Shatek, Renee Pfenning and Jackie Rico for donating items, Jackie Rico and Lynne & Mike Bates for being on our onsite team, Jackie for being our driver and thanks to Pastor Matthias, for helping us prep and keep our supplies in good order!

Known MPLS is currently working on an album they aim to release this summer! We are excited for them and will keep them in our prayers! We were treated to an excerpt from the album; "Minnesota Stand Up", a powerful and heart moving song about resistance through unity and the strength that it can give us to overcome living in fear.

Loaves and Fishes

May 7, (always the first) Thursday

(Missed this for the April issue - National Poetry Month)



Roses are red
Violets are blue
When the hungry go to bed
They will be grateful for you.

We will need at least 5 volunteers for the first shift beginning about 3:15 and ending about 5:00, and at least another 5 for the second shift volunteers to start about 5:00 and end about 6:30. Please consider helping. Send Wayne an email if you want to work with L&F and thanks so much for joining in this much appreciated and needed service.

Neighboring/Bring a Friend Sunday

May 17, Sunday

Recent months in Minnesota have reminded us how important relationships are with the people in our community. You may also have dear family and friends who are curious about this special place you claim as your church home.

The CPUC Council invites you to ask a neighbor or friend to come to church on Neighboring Sunday, May 17th at 10:15 am. There will be meaningful worship (as usual!) and special activities beyond the quiet area for children during the latter part of the service. A Fellowship Hour for all to enjoy will offered. Watch for announcements and resources in early May that you can use to invite people you know.

As Mr. Rogers said, *“Won’t you be my Neighbor?”*

Sharing Tables in Fellowship Hall

The Growing Team will arrange for some Fellowship Hall tables designated to give items you are no longer using and would like to share with friends and neighbors. We will start with books, games, and puzzles that you have enjoyed but that need a new home; there will also be a separate children’s table. We will set a time limit, after which we ask that you take your item back; a dating system will be developed so you can track when to remove. More details to follow. Possibly this can start as early as May 17!

If the idea is popular, we will expand the items to include other items i.e. plants, toys, kitchen or decorative items, or harvest from your gardens. If you have other ideas or questions, please speak to Lynne Bates, Alicia Juarez or another member of the Growing Team.

Your old treasure can be
someone’s new treasure.



A Message from Pastor Matthias

Dear CPUC,

Kimberly Danielle, who writes and speaks about story-telling, justice, and trauma-informed wellness, posits that there is a sweet-spot for the conditions in which we can grow as humans.

Drawing on some other thinkers, she frames the idea that human systems range from order to chaos. If you picture these two as a Venn diagram, the overlapping space is the area most conducive to human growth and change.

Too much chaos and there is no room for growth because we are constantly distracted and having to pivot. In the extreme, this leads to collapse of systems and organizations. On the other hand, too much order and there is no stimulus for growth. There is boredom and stagnation. Be it in life, in human systems and organizations, in relationships, it is a paradigm that can be applied to consider things with a critical eye.

This struck me as a lens which could also be applied to worship. If worship is too chaotic, there is no space to settle, to try to connect with God. Imagine if every Sunday the order of worship changed, such that you couldn't predict where or if there would be prayers, of what sort they would be, who would speak and for how long, what instruments would be utilized or what style of music would be offered. The jarring nature of constantly upset expectations would make it hard to focus on anything but being on edge about what came next.

Contrarywise, a service that is too predictable leaves little to stimulate the imagination, to provoke a new thought or new way of being. An acquaintance of mine who worships in a more liturgically structured church once asked me: "Is it normal for me to get bored in church?" There can be comfort in routine, but if worship is too predictable, it can dull its power to inspire.

I hope that each week (or most weeks) when we gather we find that middle ground on the Venn diagram: that there is enough change and unpredictability—themes, hymns, words, children's sermons—as to keep us attentive; and that there is enough stability—the general outline of worship, the theology, some familiarity in music, and always bubbles—that we are able to let our guard down enough to be open to God's Word to us.

What do you think of this Order-Chaos paradigm? Does it track with your lived experience? I'd be fascinated to know what you think.

Peace be with you,

Pastor Matthias



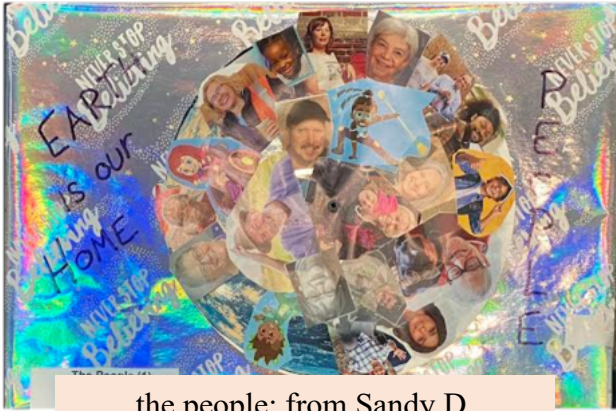
Notes from the April Council Meeting...



- Pastor Matthias reported fulfilling the usual demands of being pastor and the duties of his job, both at CPUC and the Presbytery. He planned and led worship services including Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Easter Sunday, receiving new members, Earth Day worship, and the memorial service for Phyllis. He also led a group from CPUC in Isaiah's Palm Sunday March and worship at the MN Capital. Pastor Matthias trained Demari Reynolds as Office Support Staff and worked with Sandy W. on musician coverage after her car accident in mid-April. He met with several Ministry Teams, the Growing Seasonal Steering Team, and took three days of study leave.
- The Council called a meeting on Zoom on March 30 to consider and vote on a contract with Les Jones Roofing to replace the north roof (not done at the time of the solar panel installation.) Curt Fleming presented the bid on behalf of the Property Management Team. The Council approved the contract costing \$50,077, to be paid for out of CPUC endowment funds. Gifts towards this expense are welcome. Completion of the job is anticipated this spring. Many thanks to Curt and Kelly for work on obtaining bids for this project.
- The Council approved membership at CPUC for Angela HF.
- The Council received a notice and a "thank you" from the Core Leadership Team of FREC (Facilitating Racial Equity Collaborative) informing us that in May leadership of FREC will move to organizations in Greater MN. CPUC's vital role in starting FREC and generous participation as Fiscal Agent over the years was acknowledged as well as Lynne's dedication and many hours of accounting service. Thank You, Lynne!
- The Council made plans for Neighboring Sunday on May 17th. Advertising and announcements promoting the day will be shared over the next few weeks.
- The Council approved the installation of a required emergency phone in the lift. Installation will cost \$512 and the annual contract for phone service is \$330.
- The Council approved the addition of Ingrid as an authorized signer on the CPUC Vanguard (Endowment) Account.
- The Council discussed the possibility of a more structured approach to Faith Formation for the children at CPUC. More canvassing of our families' desires in this area will be done soon. Story sharing time for the summer and a task force to plan for new options in the fall will be worked on in May.

Pastor Matthias will be away May 20 – 26. The Rev. Desiree Gold will preach on May 24 (Pentecost). The next Council meeting is scheduled for May 19, 2026

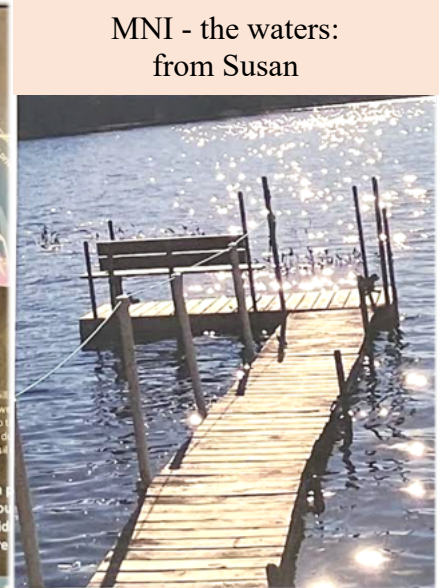
The sermon on our *Earth Day Sunday Worship* originated with the Mohawk natives of the Iroquois Confederacy – this prayer dates back over 1,000 years - the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving address and was translated to English in 1993. This was read in sections, with time for contemplation after each, and artworks created or brought by members helped focus our thoughts and prayers of thanksgiving on these wonderful gifts from the Creator.



the people: from Sandy D.



the earth mother:
from Eric M.



MNI - the waters:
from Susan



the fish:
from Art



the plants:
from Kay



the food plants:
from Alicia

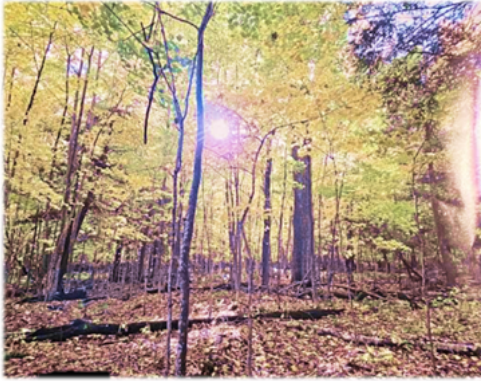


the medicine herbs:
from Lynne



the animals:
from Roxy

This prayer was traditionally recited before every gathering, not from a written page, but from the heart, with each prayer leader expressing in their own words. This sacred acknowledgement is a reminder that gratitude is required.



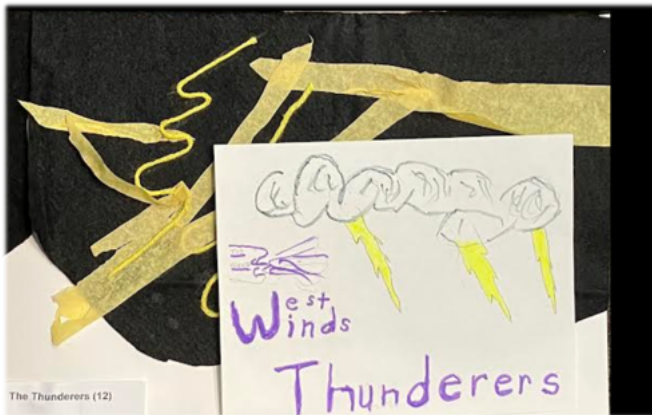
the trees: from Jane P.



the birds: from Kay



the wind: from Sarah C.



the four winds & thunderers:
from Jim & Christyann



grandmother moon:
from Maria



the stars: from
Karen & Kathy



the sun: from Sarah C.



the creator: from Sarah C.



the enlightened teachers: from Pastor Matthias

May Birthdays And Celebrations

♥ 13 - Mike & Lynne

13 - Mandy

16 - Maria

21 - Sasha

27 - Diane

♥ 28 - Jim & Karen

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

Newsletter

Please submit articles by the 22nd of preceding month to kellystrebig@comcast.net (or contact if an extension is needed)

Editor: Susan Strebig:

Proofreader: Mary

Collator: Kathy



May Giving Thanks

May 31, Sunday

The Seasonal Growing Team would like to acknowledge our church neighbors!

Every Sunday and for other CPUC events we park our cars in front of our neighbors' homes. We greatly appreciate this and would like to thank them as well as invite them to join us for worship on Sundays!

On May 31st, following the children's sermon, we invite the **children of CPUC** to gather downstairs to create thank you cards, which will be given along with a plant. We will then head out to make special deliveries to each neighbors' doorstep! If you are interested in having your child participate in this activity, please make sure they are in church on May 31. This will be a wonderful opportunity for the children to engage in community building, share their kindness skills and have fun!

If anyone has a wagon we could use that day, let me know. Contact Jackie with any questions.

Summer Worship Calendar

May 17: **Neighboring Sunday!** Bring a friend and celebrate neighbors

May 24: **Pentecost**, Rev. Désirée Gold preaching

May 31: Joyful Worship, Kids' flowers for neighbors project

June 7: **Pride Sunday**, Rainbow Themed Potluck fellowship

June 14: **Art Worship** in Fellowship Hall, Worship time shifts to 9:30 a.m.

June 21: Rev. Denise Dunbar-Perkins preaching

June 28: Worship at **Edgcumbe Presbyterian** in their **outdoor** amphitheater. (time TBA)

July 5: Joyful Worship, Communion

July 12: Rev. Désirée Gold preaching

July 19: Rev. Denise Dunbar-Perkins preaching

July 26: Worship at **Cherokee Regional Park** with picnic potluck to follow



Spring landscape cleanup will be scheduled in May or June – watch for announcements on Sundays at worship.]

Construction Ahead! Are We Wearing Hard Hats to Worship?

In the coming months, CPUC will be re-roofing part of our building! We will be replacing the north section of the roof (the portion covering the children's area, Parents' room and that long north side of the building). This is work we knew would need to be done since the installation of the solar panels in 2012.

Funding for the project will come from our endowment, in lieu of having a capital campaign. We are also looking at repairs needed to the belltower roof, but are still researching and planning for that work, with no firm details as yet.



We don't have exact dates for the work and are hopeful that the disruptions will be as minimal as possible.

Questions? Talk with any member of Council or Property Management team – Jim, Curt, or Kelly.

Staying connected! – CPUC e-directory

Our new e-directory will be emailed to you soon. Paper copies are also available. Let us know if you need to be added to the email and/or print copy list.

COUNCIL Invitation: If you would like to know more about items discussed at council meetings or contribute ideas in any way, the Council members would be glad to talk with you. Meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month and members are always welcome to attend. (A non-council member may be requested to leave the room temporarily if the council needs to meet in executive/non-public session for a time. But this rarely happens.) The Council members are Sebastian, Kathy, Maria, Sandy D., Lynne, Kay, and Jill.

(Changes for 2020 are indicated in red)

Cherokee Park United Church
Pastor: Rev. Matthias Peterson-Brandt
371 Baker St. West, St. Paul, MN 55107 • 651-227-4275
www.cherokee.org
info@cherokee.org

Members and Friends – March 2020

Abdella, Ted 651-457-5480
1080 Allen Ave.
W. St. Paul 55118

Aslamian/Larsen, Sasha
Katie & Liu Larsen
144 7th Avenue #1, Brooklyn NY 11215
sasha.aslamian@gmail.com 612-720-1021

Bates, Mike & Lynne 651-457-5158
7256 Bancroft Way, Inver Grove Hts. 55077
mikebates60@gmail.com 651-757-0971
lynnebates60@gmail.com 651-757-0970

Bergthold, Kathy
528 Humboldt Ave., # 301, St. Paul 55107
kathybergthold@gmail.com 612-963-1593

Blehn, Laurie & Sander
Ella & Nadrian
To be Announced! Maybe St. Paul
sander@readyforsocial.com 404-388-0436
laurieblehn@yahoo.com 404-834-9914

Facilitating Racial Equity Collaborative (FREC) Moves to Greater MN

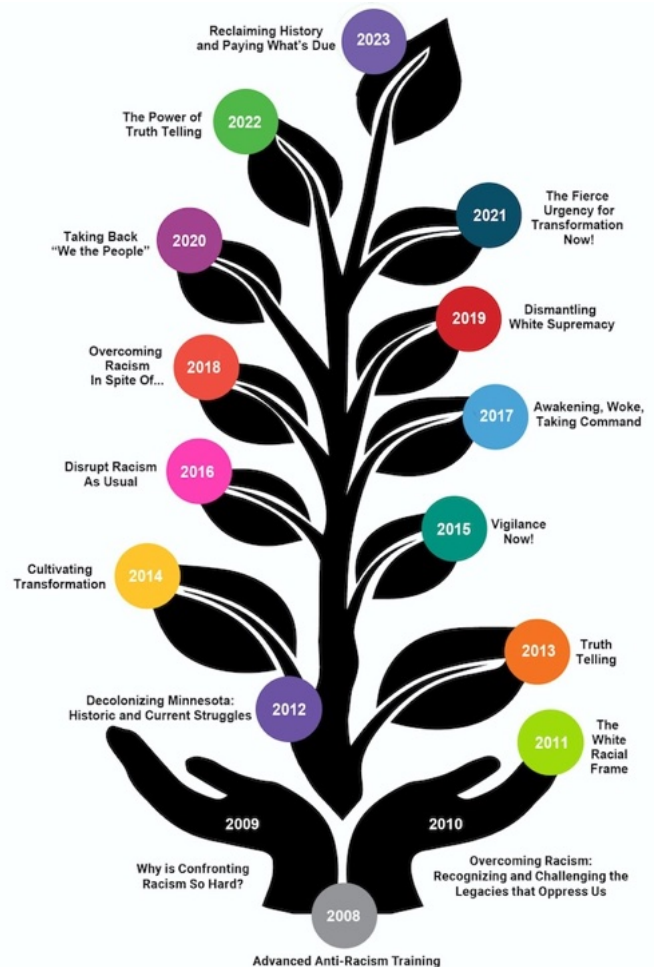
Closing Report and Thank You from FREC Core Leadership Team to CPUC Council

The Core Leadership Team (CLT) of FREC is delighted to confirm that in May it will formally hand off the continued leadership of FREC to a new leadership team whose focus is antiracism work in Greater MN.

The new leadership team represents communities throughout Greater MN who became energized by FREC's antiracism work through their participation in the Annual Overcoming Racism Conference hosted at Metropolitan State University and live streamed to communities throughout the state.

When the CLT determined it was time to sunset the work of FREC this Greater MN FREC group stepped up with the intention of continuing the work. The new leadership of FREC has chosen New Hope for Immigrants located in East Grand Forks as their Fiscal Agents. New Hope for Immigrants was also the recipient of grant funding by FREC and a host of the Overcoming Racism Conference.

None of this would have been possible without the dedicated and generous participation of Cherokee Park United Church as the Fiscal Agent for FREC. It is noteworthy that FREC emerged out of an antiracism training event hosted by Cherokee Park United Church and ASDIC in the congregation's fellowship hall in 2008. On behalf of all those who have learned and benefited through the antiracism work of FREC we express our deepest gratitude to the congregation and Pastor Matthias, with a special appreciation to Lynne Bates for her years of skilled support.



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

Make it Earth Day every day!