



Summer Hours
Worship 9:30 am
(meeting in the
cooler part of the morning)

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 ~ August 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.



State Fair Fellowship Potluck.

August 16, Sunday

This potluck organized by the *Growing Seasonal Team* is themed, **State Fair Foods**. Get your thinking caps on to come up with a food your family likes. I am sure Jim Shatek will be able to do something close to the MN Farmers Union coffee stand right inside the main entrance; my first stop each year. Great coffee. Nothing fancy, just the Farmers' Blend. So fresh! *From Lynne.*

Thank you to the current team for their past months of planning: Jackie, Kay, Laurie, Lynne, Alicia, Ingrid.

Blessing of the Ordinary

August 23, Sunday

In worship this day, we will bless the everydayness, the routines, the ordinary moments and items of our lives. Every day we touch and use all sorts of things. Can these be reminders of God's love, a call to prayer, an invitation into deeper awareness of the holy threads of life? We encourage you to bring an item with you to worship.

Your item might be a blanket, a stuffed animal, a favorite mug. It may be a beloved Bible or keepsake, something you use or look at often. It could be that you bring a backpack, a day planner, a kitchen utensil—pick something you see or use in your daily life and/or rely on. We will bless these items in our worship service together.



Plant Giveaway!

August 30, Sunday

A few of us are overgrown with African Violets, Pothos and other green plant friends. We will bring them to share; you may also bring some to give if you wish. They will be placed on the tables for fellowship – please adopt!

"Known MPLS" Dinner!

August 24, Monday

CPUC will be again providing our monthly rehearsal meal for this youth and young adult choir, which is dedicated to uplifting voices and strengthening community through music. There are a few ways to help if you'd like to be a part of the team! Cook, bake, shop, donate or serve onsite. Signup during Fellowship time or talk to Alicia or Pastor Matthias.



The choir had to cancel their practice on July 27th due to a long weekend of rehearsals. Thank you to July's team of volunteer's, Jackie Rico, Renee Pfenning, Lynne & Mike Bates and Mary Murphy, for your patience and flexibility with the unexpected change in plans!

You can hear their voices on their music video for their original new song "Go Black Man"! on YouTube. https://youtu.be/iFEflrfgZCs?si=XQLovNYuLJQwTP_-

July worship in the park supplied us with more great memories



- Eco-friendly (no paper!) songs chalked on the pavement
- Top griller, Jim, with decades of practice
- Plenty of food left over for seconds and thirds, except for Eric's Tiramisu which is always gone in a flash.



THANK YOU CPUC

for your faithful participation at the annual West St. Paul **Pride Fest!!!**

Even 90-degree weather will not deter us from expressing our love and support for our LGPTQ+ siblings.



From the Property Management Team

During this quieter time on the summer church calendar, the pilot lights of the stove and ovens in the kitchen have been turned off, decreasing kitchen temperatures and saving energy resources. If you anticipate needing to use either, please contact Jim or Curt in advance; they will re-light them for your activity.

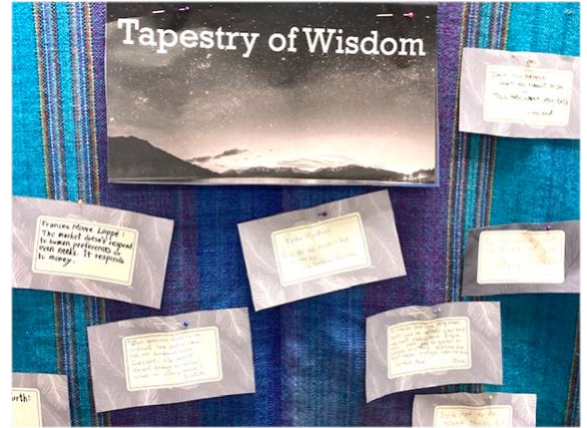


Signup for the Harvest Seasonal Steering Team!

Lay Ministries is excited to announce this final season of 2026. This Team will choose the focus of CPUC activities for the months of **September, October, November and December**. Sign up during Fellowship or with Lay Ministry Team (Moe, Lynne & Mike, Alicia) or Pastor Matthias.

Tapestry of Wisdom

One July Sunday our worship took on a new format which included table stations inviting us to experience difference forms of prayer. One area invited us to think about a trusted confidant or mentor, someone who has been a major positive influence; and then to share various pieces of wisdom, and their source, that have stuck with us as particularly helpful or necessary. Here are some of the notes:



(please pardon misspellings from misread handwriting)

-  Do the work that's in front of you. Terry Pratchett
-  If you want to know what someone really struggles with, ask them what they're good at. Escobie Juarez
-  First, do no harm. Joy S-N
-  Don't tell people what you meant to do; tell them what you DID. my dad
-  If someone you love very much hurts you or offends you and you can't understand why or how, don't try to guess or assume anything. Assume you don't have enough information. Just ask them. Moe
-  Seek not to do great things, but to do small things with great love. Mother Theresa
-  Get rid of guilt. It doesn't help. Get rid of every bit of guilt and replace it with determination. Renel Crichlew
-  The market doesn't respond to human preferences or even needs. It responds to money. Frances Moore Lappe
-  Our gracious God; with infinite love and wisdom, did not burden us with foresight. We aren't smart enough to know what to worry about. BGBM

A Message from Pastor Matthias

Dear CPUC,

Among kids and teens these days, a common response to someone who is spending way too much time on their phone or screens is “touch grass.” In other words: go outside and be in nature, even if it just a small patch of grass. Go do something real and be in the present moment outside.



Given the ubiquity of screens (in our pockets or purses basically all the time!) and their use for myriad daily tasks (banking, weather, maps, communication, entertainment, news...the list goes on) it can be more difficult and all the more necessary to spend dedicated time away from our screens.

Getting outside and “touching grass” strengthens our connection to the good earth. It can soothe and slow down our anxious nervous systems, where screens often fuel a false sense of urgency.

Meeting up with someone in person, whether for coffee, a walk, at church, or for an outing, brings us into human contact where we have to be present. On a screen a person can seem like just another collection of pixels to interact with. It doesn’t prompt the same empathy response, making it easier to type things we would never say to someone’s face or think the least generous thoughts.

Spending time on a hobby, reading, creating art, crocheting or sewing, drawing or writing, even if you do it badly, is immensely valuable too. It reminds us that we can make our own entertainment, stretch our own creativity and imagination. Facebook cannot write you a poem or paint you a picture. Immersing ourselves in arts—whether creating it for ourselves or appreciating it in offline formats—nurtures our appreciation for beauty, the perseverance of trying to express something just so, the joy of imagination.

I think spending time off our screens with people, with art and literature, in the natural world is critically important not just for our own well-being as individuals, but for the well-being of our society and world. If we do not spend time out among the plants and animals, with the waters and skies, then when their destruction is threatened it is easy enough to let it happen. If we do not meet others IRL (in real

life), how will we muster enough courage to stand up for them or empathy to care for their hurts? If we do not spend time delighting in books and arts, then it will be just another blip we scroll past when we hear of books being banned or art being labelled “degenerate” or “deviant.” (This last point, by the way, is something the Nazis did—label art as “degenerate” and have it destroyed. There’s a great exhibit at the MIA about German art 1910 - 1945).

“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also,” Jesus says. Where we spend our time and invest our connection and care shapes us as people. And the places, people, and things to which we feel connection and commitment are those things which we will find it easier to stand up for when under threat.

Yours on the way of Christ,

Pastor Matthias



(No July Council Meeting)

The next Council meeting is scheduled for August 18, 2026.

If you would like to know more about anything going on, or give input, the *Council* members would be glad to talk with you. They are: Sebastian, Kathy, Maria, Sandy, Lynne, Kay, and Jill.

A factoid about our country's prison system

20-25% of people who go back to prison and jail each year **don't go for committing a crime**, but for a technical violation, such as losing a job, being in the presence of alcohol, missing a meeting, being behind on payments, crossing a state line.

Going to prison often means losing your job, then losing your and/or your family's place of residence, losing touch with your significant others and children, losing your “place” in the job market when re-entering. And statistics show that if you are black, your wage rate is at risk of staying the same as before incarceration, for the rest of your life.

Source of New Knowledge from Susan S.

Speaking for myself, my elementary, high school, and college classes in American history were pretty much inaccurate and downright false, as far as what happened, or reasons and justifications for actions of our federal government, from its very beginning. It's hard to believe that there was no great challenge to the history writers as to their truthfulness, motivation and (lack of) understanding. And people who have gone on, woke up, and researched further now, may be threatened as "woke", by the very government that claims to protect free speech and advocates for education.



I may be "preaching to the choir" here (although I don't know why choirs are singled out), but the most helpful understandings have come from those who have lost the most and never experienced democracy, have never actually been granted full rights of citizenship – our brothers and sisters of color – natives and black peoples whose ancestors were brought here as slaves.

I recently accidentally accessed, by zoom, a wonderful speaker, at Unity Unitarian Church, native speaker and author, Mark Charles, of Dine, Navajo, and Dutch descent. His most recent (co-authored) book is, *Unsettling Truths; Ongoing Dehumanizing Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery*. He was sponsored by the Twin Cities, Rochester, and Central Minnesota Repair Communities of Makoce Ikikcupi. His information is deep, but so is our checkered U.S. history.

With the 250th celebration, we still realize that our Declaration of Independence describes native peoples as "merciless Indian Savages". Interestingly, all the grievances the Declaration described against the king of England are much the same grievances that many of us have against our current president. Even the rights of the Constitution, were NOT extended to non-white people, nor to white men who did not own land, nor to women. And the ERA has never been passed! There is much work to be done, and the present federal government has spent the last year eroding away so much progress of the past 250 years.

A video of Mark's presentation will be posted in the future on the Universal Unitarian Church Youtube channel. I will inform you when it is available. Guaranteed worthwhile time spent. Let me know if you would like a companion while viewing, or come view with me at my house, as I was unable to view the afternoon portion.

Places we should know about and can visit

Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi celebrated the grand opening of the *Wakan Tipi* Center on Friday May 29. Located along the Mississippi River on a 27-acre sacred site formerly known as the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, it will serve as an intergenerational gathering place, honoring Dakota sacred sites. *Wakan Tipi* translates to “dwelling place of the sacred” in the Dakota language. It's named after a cave located within the landscape where Dakota people gathered for ceremony.



Inside the building, a photo gallery and a map of Dakota sacred sites along the Mississippi River are on display. The building has an exhibit hall, classrooms and a community gathering area. In the entryway, there is a Dakota star constellation map, which can be changed to match the time of year. Classes are offered on Dakota language, traditional crafts such as making cradleboards, drying racks, birding and volunteer activities are available.

Outside are traditional medicine gardens that include sage, red osier dogwood used for Dakota traditional tobacco and medicinal purposes for teas, etc., plus several garden beds for sweetgrass, another traditional medicine, and cultivated foods such as corn, beans, squash and sunflowers.



History: Before European contact, this area was a vibrant floodplain on the Mississippi River. The confluence of tributaries at this sharp bend in the river made the area, known to the Dakota as Imnizaska (white bluffs), provided the perfect

place for Dakota people to make their homes. There are two significant sites within this landscape: Wakan Tipi (aka Carver's Cave), and Wicahapi, the Dakota burial mounds area above the cave. Walls of the cave contained petroglyphs which documented Dakota history, passed on through oral and storytelling traditions. They also served to honor the spirits that existed within. European settlers, developers, and the expansion of the railroad desecrated the cave and destroyed the petroglyphs. Originally there were more than 50 burial mounds, indicating the scope of the site's historical significance. Only six mounds visibly remain. Ceremonies and burials that took place there predate colonization by at least two-thousand years.

In 2003, more than 150 volunteers helped to remove 50 tons of trash from the sanctuary. Additionally, 13 tons of soils contaminated with asbestos, mercury, and other pollutants were removed from this former railroad yard site, and clean soil was brought in. Buckthorn was cleared away and the restoration of oak savanna and prairie began; the bluffs were stabilized, sprayed with seed, and youth volunteers planted new vegetation. In February 2026, volunteers stamped native seeds into the ground with their snowshoes, emulating past seed "planting" by bison. Archeologists worked to conduct site surveys for culturally significant items in partnership with the four federally recognized Dakota communities.

Due to the hard work of Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi, the City of Saint Paul, community partners, philanthropists and volunteers, the sanctuary is thriving with six ecosystems including floodplain forest, dry prairie, oak savanna, bluff prairie, oak woodland, and spring-fed streams and wetlands. As the water and native trees and plants have returned to heal this land, so too, have returned the wildlife. We pray and work for healing of our indigenous siblings. Mitakuye oyasin.



2024 Ceremonial Groundbreaking for Center

Open to the public Wed - Sat 10:00am - 4:00pm ~ Email: info@wakantipi.org ~ (651) 370-2106 ~ GPS Driving Address: 265 Commercial St., Saint Paul, MN 55106



Bright Spots of Hope...being thankful for great leadership in our stressful times

The U.S. scientists fired by T*ump launched a new website to make the government's climate data freely accessible. Called **Climate.us**, the platform is a clone of the shuttered federal site, bringing back over 15 years of climate data etc., funded by crowdsourcing, and run by around 80 volunteer scientists and researchers.

What's it like up there?



Up on top of the bell tower, which is being repaired by Curt, the view includes bricks needing tuckpointing, a now-open hatch which had been previously inaccessible as sealed up for possibly 50 years, and a view of the downtown St. Paul skyline.

Members and Friends August Birthdays and Celebrations

06 - Curt
06 - Bob
08 - Mary B.
11 - Parker
❤️ 12 - Eric & Mandy
13 - Kathy B.
14 - Karen
15 - Ted
16 - Kandy
❤️ 23 - Eric & Jane
26 - Shannon
30 - Jane P.

[These dates were informally gathered. If you are a member or friend we invite you onto this list. Just give your details to Susan.]

Newsletter

Please submit articles by the 22nd of preceding month to susanstrebig@gmail.com (or contact if an extension is needed)

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Cherokee Park United Church
United Church of Christ/Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Open & Affirming, Multicultural, Antiracist
371 W. Baker Street
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Sunday Worship **summer hours - 9:30 am**
<https://www.facebook.com/cherokeeparkchurch/live>
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651-227-4275
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cherokeeparkunited.org

*“Universe” means “One Song”
Lakotas know that the song sings the singer.
The Spirit sings the song.
(from Basil Braveheart FB)*