Back to cool weather schedule!
Worship starts at
10:15 am

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 ~October 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 Bike Ride!

October 10, Saturday, 2pm

Join us for a bike ride with your CPUC friends! Our mostly flat route, of approximately 30 minutes (one way), with beautiful scenic views, will begin from the parking lot near the Harriet Island Pavilion (Plato Blvd & Dr. Justus Ohage Blvd) and will continue along the river into Mendota where we will enjoy a snack/drink at Lucky's 13 Pub before heading back to Harriet Island.

Please sign up at church or talk to Alicia or Pastor Matthias.

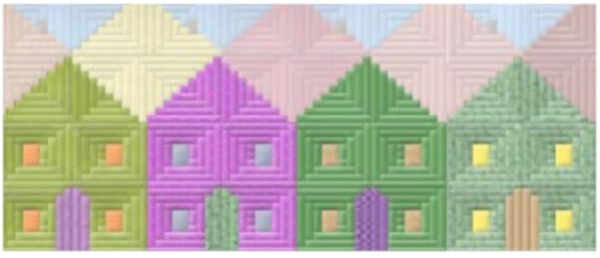
Thank you from St Paul Mennonite Fellowship to CPUC

October 18, Sunday 2 pm, invitation

You have provided us a home for so many years! It has been a very good time for us in a very good place.

You may have heard that the fellowship will stop functioning as a church in November. We are still a beloved community and will continue together in some form, but not as a church. There's some sadness that goes with this, but also a lot of discussion, planning, and celebration. After all, we've beaten all the odds by surviving more than 40 years as a unique, tough, loving, open, fun church. We have invested a lot of effort into creating our archive, which is now physically protected at the Tretter Library of the University of Minnesota. We've digitized it all, too, and will make that available to the public sometime. We also expect to commission an author to write our story. So we're not disappearing, just retiring!

Our last official event as a church will be Sunday October 18th at 2:00 at CPUC. We'll have a celebration with stories, songs, and musical entertainment. And we'll have cake afterwards! ***We hope you can join us.*** The program will last until about 3:15 and the cake-eating until about 4:00.



Día de los Muertos!

October 18, Sunday, collecting begins

Please join us in the remembrance and celebration of lives of our loved ones, heroes and legends that have inspired us, that have since passed on to the heavenly banquet. Let us pray and reflect on how they enriched our lives while walking along side us on this journey and how one day we shall meet again.

Please bring photos, non-perishable favorite treats of your loved ones and any items that may have been dear to them. Items you bring in may be placed in the Fellowship Hall **beginning October 18th** on the designated table, or directly on the altar beginning November 1st. Items may be retrieved on November 15th.

Questions? Please reach out to Alicia.

Known MPLS Dinner from organizer, Alicia

October 26, Monday

CPUC will again be providing an evening meal for *Known MPLS* youth choir. We serve this monthly, usually on last Mondays. Teens and young adults arrive by bus, often straight from school so need this nourishment and care.

The choir's name comes from a double meaning centered on a desire for young people to feel seen, valued, and celebrated; but also, the value of seeing and validating others as this is a world where many feel ignored and unrecognized.

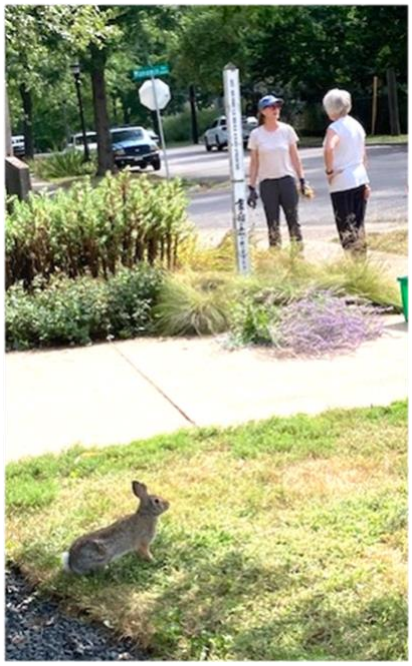
There are a few ways to help if you'd like to be a part of the team! Cook, bake, shop, donate or serve onsite. Signup during Fellowship time or talk to Alicia or Pastor Matthias.

Special thanks to the September team of volunteers including Jill , Renee , Mary, Maria and Diane.

*Known MPLS was invited by the Minnesota Council of Churches to sing at **Prayer at the Fair**, spreading joy, hope, and love through music.*

Lions and tigers and cows, oh my!

At worship on September 27 all God's creatures were honored as sacred; a procession brought photos of beloved pets both living and those across the rainbow bridge. Costumes and ears and tails arrived as symbols of those beloved animals, part of a balanced system of nature, that we strive to protect. Thank you to Janet for her creativity and energetic leadership. Photos on page 11.



Landscape care finé

After many hours on many days, and a final burst on September 12, the crew put our landscape to rest for the Fall and Winter - with supervisory help from the CPUC church bunny. (lower left)

A Message from Pastor Matthias

Dear CPUC,

In the past month, the deaths of several beloved public figures have elicited tributes from many adoring fans and admirers. Dolly Parton was praised for her music, dedication to literacy, and all around human decency. The actor Tim Curry was celebrated for beloved roles in Rocky Horror Picture Show and Clue, among others, and his embrace of being weird and offbeat. Wendell Berry, the radical Christian agriculturist and author, was eulogized by many for his simple sensibilities and clarity of vision connecting the faith of Jesus to love of creation and the rural poor.

To look to well-known people for inspiration—in whatever field: music, acting, writing, politics, faith—is a normal human trait. We all rely on one another and find comfort and inspiration and learning in other non-famous humans in our lives.

With famous figures it is a one-way relationship. Because of their notoriety or publicized lives, we have access to stories about them and information about what they do and who they are in the world. However, this is only ever a partial knowledge. Unless a celebrity discloses deep struggles or failures (a very vulnerable thing for anyone to do!), we may celebrate their contributions to society, while not knowing the other side of their humanity: their hurts and harms, their flaws and foibles.

None of this discounts the tremendous joy it is to see a famous person do something extraordinary or beautiful. And as long as our celebration of heroes doing amazing things does not veer over into idolizing or unquestioning worship, it can be a good tonic to rejoice in good art and good deeds. And yes, this can be harder to parse these days when social media virality may drive actions as much as actually doing something charitable or courageous or good.

Still, it reminds us of who we aspire to be as humans and the good of which we are capable. The rap artist Macklemore was recently kicked off the Ed Sheeran tour after he said “Free Palestine” at one of his shows, to the dismay of the conservative

concert venue owner and promoters. He took this in stride and used the publicity of it to point attention back to the plight of the people of Palestine. Maybe there is some gain for him in it, but taking this public stand certainly cost him a lot of money he would have earned touring.

God shows up in our imperfect lives and our very human and limited attempts to fulfill Christ's calling. Whatever our shortcomings, we can each strive to live faithfully and courageously. We can each look to others who draw out our creativity and courage. Whether famous or not, we each get to choose how we will live and from where we will draw inspiration.

Blessings,
Pastor Matthias

September Council meeting notes

- In August, the Council received a request from the Antiracism Community of Transformation (ACT), formerly known as ASDIC Metamorphosis, for CPUC to become the group's fiscal agent. Pastor Matthias and Lynne met with an ACT representative and clarified the scope and scale of work this commitment would entail. They feel that CPUC could handle the demands of this responsibility. The Council asked Lynne and Pastor Matthias to draft a written agreement for approval at our October meeting.
- Pastor Matthias and Kay shared experiences from the Story Times held for children during the summer. Ideas for establishing structures and norms for all Faith Formation participants were surfaced. Many families said they would like to try a 9 am Education Hour instead of having children leave worship for learning. The Council agreed that a next step is to have children, families, and Faith Formation volunteers meet to shape the way forward. We continue to seek best practices for CPUC while remaining loving and positive in this ministry.
- Kathy Band Jill J reported on the hybrid Presbytery meeting on September 10th held at the Associated Church of Owatonna. Kathy read during the worship service. Several ministers new to the Presbytery were welcomed and one was celebrated into retirement. Information about finances and 2027 meetings was shared.
- Pastor Matthias reported that because of a change in personnel, Les Jones roofing has not completed work on the north roof. Pastor Matthias will keep trying to resolve the matter. Final payment will not be made until the job is done.

- The Harvest Seasonal Team has many things planned for the final months of 2026. Follow church publications and announcements for events both inside and outside of our building. Thank you, Harvest Team!
- Pastor Matthias shared his continued joy of ministering at CPUC. He reported fulfilling the usual demands of being pastor and the duties of his job, both at CPUC and the Presbytery this past month. He noted that Sandy Waterman returned as Music Director on September 6th. Our administrative assistant, Demari, is back from time with her family as well. Worship time moved back to 10:15 am smoothly on September 13th. Pastor Matthias continues organizing an Inquirer's Class for people interested in membership at CPUC, He will take his final week of 2026 study leave September 28 through October 4.
- Pastor Matthias reported that the Lay Ministry Team is considering people needed to fill specialized church roles in 2027.
- The Council noted recent efforts around our building. Thank you to the volunteer landscapers who beautified our grounds with their work. Thanks also to the people who switched the artwork inside our building. These changes look fabulous!
- The next Council meeting is scheduled for October 20, 2026.

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

September houseplants giveaway

CPUC ~~~~ love through the bars~~~~ *from Susan*

Crazy Cub, an inmate in a Pennsylvania prison, took advantage of one of the few computer classes offered there. As a regular reader of our church newsletter, he was inspired to draw our building, based on one of our newsletter cover photos. Although the equipment available to inmates in prisons is usually quite outdated, he managed this piece using a mouse and Paint app on an aging Dell. And he was very proud of himself, as he should be. He even managed to reproduce the words on the banner which was on the building at the time.

He always looks forward to reading our newsletter and shares it with others who want to read it. He particularly looks forward to Pastor Matthias message. Cub was inspired by the piece which suggested we get outside and touch the grass to strengthen our connection with mother earth. He took the encouragement to connect with nature by laying in the grass. And then he wrote a wopila note to Pastor saying, among other things, "I closed my eyes, slid my feet on the grass…that was something I never did before, and closed my eyes…and felt the grass between my fingers and toes. It really worked! Wow, what a feeling!"

In a prison, surfaces are all hard, cold, and grey. Even the padding on the bed serving as a mattress is too thin to really cushion limbs. Mother nature provides what a prison locks out – a cushion for body, color, smell, a touch of breeze on your skin, a glimpse of birds or possibly even a deer.

.....but I didn't want to hurt the butterfly

Who said these words to me? A child? A committed environmentalist? One of the friends or members of our church who rescues Monarch eggs from milkweed plants and raises them indoors to release when full grown? No, it was said by Jamon, one of our long-distance inmate friends who we support in a Pennsylvania prison.

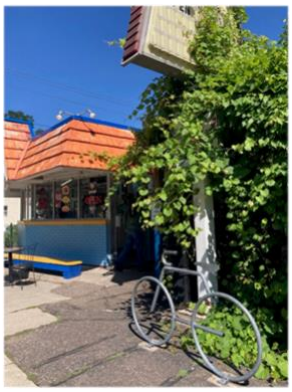
Yes, there is a theme here, of prison life. Like Crazy Cub in the preceding article, Jamon is another inmate who also read Pastor Matthias' column encouraging us to "touch the grass and ...be among plants, animals, water, skies." So, he did just that. He rolled up his pant legs and took off his shoes and socks and laid in the grass (all dangerous deeds as some guards and policies do not allow you on the grass when you are outside.) Rubbing his hands and feet in the grass, feeling a breeze, listening for birds - this was a few minutes of feeling human, a creature of God, not a caged being.

On a later day, playing basketball during the one hour he was allowed out in the "yard", surrounded by a razor-topped fence, he stopped to rest and a butterfly hovered around him. Standing still, he wondered if he held out his arm, would it think it was a branch? (Jamon IS brown!) Yes, it stopped for a rest there. As Jamon quietly watched, he saw something coming out of its head and first feared he was being bitten; but then realized it was the proboscis and the butterfly was just drinking the sweat off his arm! His next thought was wondering if the salt would harm the Monarch, so he blew lightly on it and it flew away. Saved by the consideration of a convicted felon.

Should these thoughtful men be in prison? And one was given a life sentence!!

Last month to shop at the WestSide Farmers Market

Too tired to walk through a big Farmer's Market? This place is for you. In and out in 15 minutes and time to sit under the green arbor, sip a cold or hot drink and listen to local musical talent. *Saturdays 9 to noon*. Corner of Stryker and George



For all who celebrate birthdays, a message from **Rainbow Dancer Thunderbird,** incarcerated in a Pennsylvania state prison, who is a special member of our congregation.

According to indigenous people,

*this is your **entry day.***

Every day you wake up on this side, it's a birthday, as every day you get
new cells, new hair, and new breath!!
And a new chance to balance out your scales.

The circle of this existence is birth, life, (old age, sickness), death.

However: Death is not the end.

It's a continuation.

Members and Friends October Birthdays and Celebrations

06 - Ethan
❤13 - Brad and Kay
❤15 – Dave & Jackie
16 - Adrien
16 - Jill J
17 - Kelly
18 - Joy
20 - Matthias installed as Pastor at CPUC 2019!!
25 - Kay
25 - Stefan
31 - Sander

[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)
Editor: Susan
Proofreader: Mary
Collator: Kathy

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
https://www.facebook.com/cherokeeparkchurch/live
Pastor: Rev. Matthias Peterson-Brandt
651-227-4275
cpuc@usfamily.net
cherokeeparkunited.org

While I know myself as a creation of God,
I am also obligated to realize and remember
that everyone else and everything else
are also God's creation.
Maya Angelou