

Together we celebrate the work of God's Spirit among us through Christian fellowship and service throughout our community, practicing a welcoming spirit, honoring each person, and challenging one another to seek God's purpose in the world – with the promise of joy, renewal, and spiritual growth.

(Mission Statement, adopted 1996)

HYDE PARK UNION CHURCH

Chartered in 1874 in the Free Church Tradition
American Baptist/United Church of Christ
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August 2014

August Church Calendar

Friday, August 1

Ecumenical Worship in the Spirit of Taize, 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, August 3

Summer Series Worship with Communion and Sacred Jazz, 10:00 a.m., Rev. Wesley Sun preaching, Music by Peter Saltzman, piano

Summer Series Discussion Over Coffee, 11:30 a.m.

Monday, August 4

Yoga and Centering Prayer, 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, August 6

Bible Study, 1:00 p.m.

Sunday, August 10

Summer Series Worship with Sacred Jazz and Remembrance of Chicago's Fallen Children and Youth, 10:00 a.m., Justin Howell preaching, Music by Christopher Mahieu, piano

Chili-making, 11:30 a.m.

Summer Series Discussion Over Coffee, 11:30 a.m.

Monday, August 11

Yoga and Centering Prayer, 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, August 13

Bible Study, 1:00 p.m.

Thursday, August 14

Summer Dinner and Video Prep, 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, August 17

Summer Series Worship with Sacred Jazz, 10:00 a.m., Jack Lesniewski preaching, Music by the Buddy Fambro Trio

Summer Series Discussion Over Coffee, 11:30 a.m.

Monday, August 18

Yoga and Centering Prayer, 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, August 20

Bible Study, 1:00 p.m.

Sunday, August 24

Summer Series Worship with Sacred Jazz, 10:00 a.m., Fred Behlen preaching

Summer Series Discussion Over Coffee, 11:30 a.m.

Monday, August 25

Yoga and Centering Prayer, 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, August 27

Bible Study, 1:00 p.m.

Sunday, August 31

Worship, 10:00 a.m., Rev. Dr. M. Kent Mayfield preaching

Coffee Hour and Fellowship, 11:30 a.m.

From the Senior Minister
Rev. Susan Johnson

Diversity as the Starting Point, Inclusivity the Goal

I am not so much surprised as delighted that at our conversations about the church's upcoming video (to be imbedded in our website) people keep coming back to our congregation's many diversities. Valuing not simply the demographic staples of race, gender, age and marital status, we profess to enjoy our membership in a spiritual community that also encompasses differences in sexual orientation and identity, theology, vocation, political affiliation, and life experience itself. "I don't want to belong to a church where everyone is basically the same as me," one member said. "Where's the growth in that? It's not like life. Our church is more real than that."

But we would also have to confess that it is not always fun to be real. It can be more comforting to sing the hymns we grew up with than to learn the songs that are meaningful to someone else. It can require real effort to understand the belief system of a person whose theology differs from our own. And governance in a church where people have different life experiences requires not only that we listen to ideas that are different from our own, but that we make our decisions based on what is good for and builds the whole, as well as appealing to individuals.

The fallback position is to support the things that feed your own spirit and figure that there are also, or should be, programs that meet the needs of others. This is "Church as Smorgasbord," and it works as far as it goes, though there are practical limits to how many disparate small groups a church can sponsor unless it has lots of committed lay leadership. The larger question, however, is where the intersection between these affinity groups takes place – that is, how do we move past our superficial acquaintance with each other to the deeper understanding and mutuality to which we are called?

We all do it. We go to the events that interest us, and skip the ones that don't. We measure the success of church events or programs based on whether they have met our personal preferences or needs. But if diversity is prerequisite to God's "beloved community," we need to attend to what actually builds the beloved community. This is where "Church as Smorgasbord" is not enough. A smorgasbord is not a diet; it is simply the presence of variety. With a diet, choice is not *just* about choice; it is about health. And in a spiritual community, what might otherwise seem like a personal choice is endowed with the power to bring health and well-being to the whole.

How often do we ask ourselves whether something we may not immediately enjoy at church might still be very good for us? Moreover, how often do we ask ourselves what is good for the community as a whole? How do we even formulate those questions? What does it mean to pay attention to the good of the whole? How would we express our commitment to this goal? It can be obvious – for example, we would like non-parents to volunteer in our children's programs. It is good for the children of our church, and also good for the adults involved. It brings the church together around the next generation, the future –

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not just our own nieces, nephews, grandchildren, but the world's. Likewise, arguing together about politics may seem important to do – we might change each other's minds on a subject; we might have our own perspective broadened or find our mind changed.

But what about our most fundamental communal activity – worship? How does worship move beyond a smorgasbord in which we take what we like and eschew the rest? Can it, should it, also be an opportunity to deepen our relationships with people whose life experiences differ from our own? What do we do *spiritually* with the parts of worship that do not immediately speak to us? Are they merely irrelevant or should we wrestle with them at a deeply personal level? And in what ways might we be called to appreciate and even celebrate things that are good for the whole in worship, even if they are less important to us? What does it look like when this is happening?

It is heartening to know that our many diversities are important to us as a spiritual community, but tolerating diversity is a common American cultural theme. In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "If you love those who love you...if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?" (Matt. 5:46-47) We long for something better than tolerance in our life together. Our denominations call that better thing "inclusivity."

I believe we have the underpinnings *and* some of the features of inclusivity in our congregational life. How might we convey inclusivity in a video, and – most importantly – how do we live it day by day as Christians? How do we plan for it in our church decision-making? And, Sunday by Sunday, how do we honor it as a church?

Congregational Notes

Congratulations to high school graduates **Danni Ondraskova** and **Kirsten Bray**. Danni will be attending Wellesley College in Wellesley, Massachusetts and Kirsten will attend Spellman College in Atlanta, Georgia.

Congratulations to **Dr. Cori Harley**, who has earned her Doctor of Psychology degree in Clinical Forensic from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology.

An Unfolding Story

Rev. Erma Croom, Director of the Gilead Ministry

***This is my story, this is my song.
Praising my savior all the day long.***

The words above comprise the refrain of a popular hymn *Blessed Assurance*. Today as I think about my life, the blessings and opportunities God has afforded me, I think back to the day when my life story merged with the story of Gilead Ministry. I also think about various aspects of my journey which preceded that event. My seminary journey began in 2004 at the age of 47, as a part of my ordination

process with the African Methodist Episcopal Church. During this journey I have completed several educational and career goals. There is no doubt in my mind that it is God's providence that has brought me to this particular juncture in my life. However, the journey has not always been easy, it has involved some struggle and sacrifice but there is no doubt in my mind that this is the path that has been chosen for me. I feel truly blessed to be at Gilead Ministry.

The story of Gilead Ministry is also unfolding as it continues to have a significant impact and to be a viable pastoral presence for the staff, patients, family and medical students at Jackson Park Hospital. One indication of the impact of Gilead Ministry occurred recently when I was approached by some of the medical students and asked to aid them in coordinating a memorial service on July 10th for one of their colleagues, Monica Ficek, who passed away suddenly on June 23. The passing of Monica represented a significant loss for all of us at Jackson Park Hospital, particularly the medical students whose lives Monica touched.

The medical students recognizing their need for community during this very difficult time engaged the support of Gilead ministry to help create a sacred and supportive space where they could share their grief and remember their dear friend and colleague. Those gathered consisted mainly of the medical students, but they were also supported by the faculty and some of the doctors. I was moved by their recognition of their need to come together and support each other during this difficult time and as they shared how much Monica meant to them through their expressions of cards, flowers and reflections. It was for me indeed a sacred moment in the life of the Jackson Park Hospital and represented a profound pause from the normal business of the day.

As we look forward to the fall and the remainder of the year. I am excited about our on-going collaboration with Urban Clinical Pastoral Education, partnering seminaries and with Rev. Wesley Sun and the University of Chicago Divinity School. I am excited about what these collaborations mean regarding the opportunity for guiding, training and mentoring interns as they explore and test their sense of call to chaplaincy ministry.

In September we will continue the traditional 911 observance at Jackson Park Hospital and that of honoring first responders. I believe Gilead Ministry is poised to make measurable strides in the next year or so. It is such a gift to be able to serve at Jackson Park Hospital, to be a part of Hyde Park Union Church and to be a part of Gilead Ministry's unfolding story. It is a gift for which I am very grateful.

Volunteers for Coffee Hour Needed

Sundays from now to March 2015 are ready for sign-up.

To sign-up, please contact the church office via email (office@hpuc.org) or by phone (773.363.6063).

Sign-ups can also be done on our website at <http://hpuc.org/education-and-fellowship/coffeehour/sign-up/>.

Video Prep: Your Input Needed!

Amanda Guthrie

We have had two Dinner & Video Prep events so far this summer. As many of you know, we are hoping to make a video about our congregation during the fall since more and more people learn about our community by searching online. A video will highlight who we are and what is important to us.

At our first dinner in June, we watched a video made by First Congregational United Church of Christ in Manhattan, KS. You can find the video online on YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zPNbC6DME3Y&feature=youtu.be>. We then discussed what their video prompted us to think should be included in ours. We mentioned our sanctuary space and the stained glass windows, Coffee and Second Hour, Chili-making, Adult and Children's Choirs, Bible Studies, Sunday School, and the Gilead Ministry. When we thought about what we would want others to know about our community, one idea came across loud and clear: we are a place for everyone. We are a diverse group in many ways – with different backgrounds, opinions, and ideas – but every person is valued here. Each of us is an integral party of the community. We love one another, and we love God – always asking of ourselves and of our community, 'What would love have me/us do?'

This idea was the starting point for our second conversation in July. After reaffirming this notion about who we are as a community, we considered how our Sunday mornings together express this. We talked about the variety found in our worship service – in the music and prayers. We talked about how important it is to us for the children to lead us in worship every week and for there to be lay and guest participation. We talked about our desire for intellectual engagement with room for more emotional responses in and to worship. And we talked about how Sunday mornings end – with long conversations and people helping each other to cars and home.

You can see the notes from our dinners and all of the responses on the posters that are hanging on the wall on the north side of the social hall.

If you were unable to attend these dinners, please take the chance to let us know your thoughts about the video.

- What programs do you think have to be included in our video?
- What do you want others to know about our community? What is important to our identity as a congregation?
- What images will be important to show? What will we want to elaborate on through words?
- Any other ideas?

Please email Amanda your responses to these questions at amanda@hpuc.org. Hard copies of this survey will also be available at the back table of the sanctuary on Sunday mornings. Finally, please join us on August 14th from 6-8pm for our final Dinner & Video Prep conversation of the summer. At this dinner, we'll really begin to map out the shape of our video!

Seventh Inning Stretch

Jade Maze

This week will mark the halfway point of our seven weeks of sacred jazz. It's been glorious thus far to hear all the different textures as part of our morning worship this summer coupled with the guest in-house preachers. The next two weeks will be a little more subdued with our solo pianists. Both have been with us before.

Peter Saltzman floats between the jazz and classical worlds, both as a pianist and composer. He's just finished a premiere run of his one-man piano show *Piano Diaries* at the Athenaeum Theatre. "The 85-minute piece is at its best when Saltzman just sits at the piano and plays — superbly... whether making his way through the work of jazz masters McCoy Tyner and Randy Weston (his early favorites), the blues, the fugues of Bach, a lovely riff on Beethoven's 'Für Elise,' a lilting tune by Brazil's Antonio Carlos Jobim, or his own pieces, including 'Mixolydian Waltz,' a work he wrote and recorded when he was just 17." Hedy Weiss—*Chicago Sun Times*

Chris Mahieu is a very understated, humble player and person. I'm thrilled to have him here in our sanctuary with his quiet presence. He's well liked and respected on the Chicago music scene. Many of our guest musicians have seen his name on the banner and asked me to say "Hi" to him.

We will bring the energy level back up for our last two sacred jazz services with two great guitar groups. Buddy Fambro comes to us from the smooth jazz world. He will have the fantastic Chuck Webb with him on bass. Tim Fitzgerald is more of a "straight ahead" jazz player. I always think of sunshine when I hear him play.

Some of you have really enjoyed the quaintness of singing the children's blessing and Doxology a cappella. We will see the return of our organ player Rudy Gartner the first Sunday in August, and he will anchor our services with the prelude and communion music while we still have our guests.

Backpack Drive for St. Martin de Porres

We are soliciting cash donations from the congregation in support of our annual effort to provide backpacks for student and mothers as they start back to school in August. Last year we provided 22 backpacks as a gift from our congregation. **The cost of each pack (filled with age-appropriate materials) averages about \$25.**

If you can donate, please make a note on your check indicating it is for backpacks, or place appropriately designated cash in the offering plate. Susan Art will be shopping for the packs and contents and we will assemble them on August 10.

In Conjunction with Our Summer Series

Yoga & Centering Prayer: Coming to Present to Listen for the Spirit

All levels welcome.

If you have any serious injuries or medical concerns, please be sure to discuss practicing yoga with your doctor.

If you have any questions, please contact Amanda at amanda@hpuc.org.

Calendar (7-8pm):

Mondays: August 4, August 11, August 18, & August 25



Church Dinner: Listening for the Spirit as a Community

Join us for fellowship and conversation. We will discuss how the Spirit has moved in our community in the past and try to discern together where the Spirit is leading us next.

Thursday, August 14, 2014, 6-8 p.m.



**Hyde Park Union Church
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