

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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Chicago, Illinois 60637
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March 2014

March Church Calendar

Sunday, March 2

Worship with Communion, 10:00 a.m.,
Amanda Guthrie preaching

Second Hour: The Didache, 11:30 a.m.

Wednesday, March 5

Bible Study, 1:00 p.m.

Ashes and Candlelight: Ash Wednesday Service
in the Spirit of Taizé, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 6

Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 9

Worship with Remembrance of Chicago's
Fallen Children and Youth, 10:00 a.m., Rev.
Susan Johnson preaching

Chili-making, 11:30 a.m.

Lenten Series: Heal Thyself - Carol Horton, Co-
Founder of Chicago's Socially Engaged Yoga
Network (SEYN) speaking, 11:30 a.m.

Wednesday, March 12

Bible Study, 1:00 p.m.

Thursday, March 13

Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 16

Worship, 10:00 a.m., Guest Preacher TBA

Lenten Series: Responses to Trauma Exposure
and Willingness to Change, 11:30 a.m., Susan
Art speaking

Wednesday, March 19

Bible Study, 1:00 p.m.

Young Adult Bible Study, 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, March 20

Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 23

Worship, 10:00 a.m., Rev. Susan Johnson
preaching

Lenten Series: Finding Our Way: Creating
Space for Inquiry & Choosing Our Focus, 11:30
a.m., Rev. Betsy Ritzman speaking

Wednesday, March 26

Bible Study, 1:00 p.m.

Thursday, March 27

Senior Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 30

Worship, 10:00 a.m., Guest Preacher TBA

Lenten Series: Finding Our Way: Building
Compassion and Community & Finding
Balance, Rev. Wesley Sun speaking

From the Senior Minister Rev. Susan Johnson

From the Pastors: A Lenten Series on Trauma Stewardship

We are all exposed to trauma. Some of us have had personal experiences of it, others of us work in professions where we see it every day, and all of us live in a world that is full of it. In our local community, we see and hear daily of violence, homelessness, and abuse by those with power. In our world, we bear witness to these on large scales – to wars, poverty, and oppression. We are also threatened by traumas we are likely to experience in the future – the effects of climate change and of technological advances with unknown consequences.

As people of faith, we are called to enter into spaces where trauma occurs. We are called to feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, and visit the prisoner. We are called to “loose the bonds of injustice, undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke.”

This work is not easy. This work changes us. And, if we are not careful, it can hurt us. It can drain us of emotional and physical energy; it can make us angry, cynical, and fearful; it can cause us to lose our ability to empathize and to imagine new possibilities.

But we can also do this work in a way that prevents such damage. We can become aware of its impact on our own lives and engage in individual and communal practices of healing. Once we become aware of our needs and care for them, we can better attend to people and systems in need – we can care for them without losing ourselves or giving ourselves away. It is only then that we can participate in trauma *stewardship*, a practice in which we “always remember the privilege and sacredness of being called to help. It means maintaining our highest ethics, integrity, and responsibility every step of the way” (*Trauma Stewardship* by Laura van Dernoot Lipsky, 6). We can only participate in trauma stewardship when we are “[maintaining] the inner resources we need to care for ourselves and to care for others and the planet” (146).

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In our Lenten Series, we will study what it means that we are called to trauma stewardship. How do we enter into spaces where trauma occurs in a way that respects both our own limitations and the needs of those people and systems we encounter? How do we know what effects trauma has had in our own lives? What healing practices can we participate in as individuals and as a community that will allow us to engage in this work?

Join us in a sacred space each week as we think through this topic with an introduction by a speaker, response from a panel, and conversation with our community.

- March 9 An Introduction to Trauma Stewardship
Carol Horton, co-founder of Socially Engaged Yoga Network (Ms. Horton teaches yoga in Cook County Jail)

- March 16 Responses to Trauma Exposure & Willingness to Change
Susan Art, Dean of the College, University of Chicago

- March 23 Finding Our Way: Creating Space for Inquiry & Choosing Our Focus
Rev. Betsy Ritzman, Director of the Wellness Center, Dominican University

- March 30 Finding Our Way: Building Compassion and Community & Finding Balance
Rev. Wesley Sun, Director of Field Education & Community Engagement, University of Chicago Divinity School

- April 6 Finding Our Way: Centering Ourselves
Rev. Susan Johnson and Ms. Amanda Guthrie

In Memoriam

We were saddened to learn of the death on February 14 of **George Anastaplo**, long-time resident of Hyde Park and legal scholar. George's wife **Sara Anastaplo** attended the Woman's Society for many years, and two of their granddaughters took part in the church's dramatic productions and in the youth group while in elementary and middle school.

There is a Balm in Gilead!

Rev. Erma Croom, Director of the Gilead Ministry

Greetings to all and thank you for the many well wishes I have received since assuming the position as the Director of Gilead Ministry. I feel blessed to have the opportunity to be part of the ministerial staff of Hyde Park Union Church and to serve the patients, family and staff at Jackson Park Hospital. I am also grateful for the foundation established by Reverend Wesley Sun which makes my transition into the Director's position much easier. My appointment as the new Director of Gilead Ministry leads me to reflect on the passage of scripture that sets the Biblical framework for our ministry at Jackson Park Hospital.

In the 8th chapter of the book of Jeremiah the prophet raises a critical question. What prompts his query is that Jeremiah and the people of God are in the midst of a crisis. Judah is on the verge of disaster. The people have become estranged from their God, estranged from their culture and history and in essence estranged from themselves; as a result, doom and destruction has been declared.

Jeremiah's grief echoes the depth of his people's pain and anguish: "Since my people are crushed I am crushed: I mourn, and horror grips me" (Jeremiah 8:21 NIV). The nation is broken and wounded, and the prophet finds himself wondering whether or not there is a remedy that would restore the health of the people. Referring to the healing ointment that was produced in the region of Gilead, Jeremiah asks, "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?" (Jeremiah 8:22a NIV).

Howard Thurman, noted African-American pastor, theologian, scholar and mystic, points out how the *Spirituals*, the sorrow songs created by enslaved Africans in this country, spoke to their suffering and their hope for healing and restoration. Thurman proclaims they "straightened the question mark in Jeremiah's sentence into an exclamation point: "There is a balm in Gilead!" And, as the verse continues, "to make the wounded whole." Out of the horrors of enslavement emerged, according to Thurman, "an optimism that grows out of the pessimism of life and transcends it. It is an optimism that uses the pessimism of life as raw material out of which it creates its own strength."¹ In essence the definitive declaration of the enslaved was an expression of persistent and profound hope in spite of a harsh and at times brutal reality.

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Jackson Park Hospital is a place where many of those who struggle with illness also experience feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. As I see it, the presence of Gilead Ministry and Gilead Women's Auxiliary at Jackson Park Hospital, is a contemporary expression of Jeremiah's question mark being straightened into an exclamation point that is reflective of God's healing balm of compassion and generosity, a healing ministry that transforms lives and inspires hope within patients, families and staff. Therefore, I am honored to be a part of this great work and I too, echo the words of the *Spiritual*, "There is a Balm in Gilead!"

¹Howard Thurman, *For the Inward Journey: The Writings of Howard Thurman*, selected by Ann Spencer Thurman, (Richmond, Indiana: Friends United Meeting, 1984), 225.

2013 Stewardship Reflections

Sophie Behlen, Moderator

It is our custom in November to hear reflections by some members of the church during our Stewardship Campaign. Last November was no exception, and we were fortunate to hear 3 very different and thoughtful reflections. Some of you may not have been in the service on those days and so we've reprinted them here for you.

The first Sunday of the Stewardship campaign was opened by me. So, naturally, there is some logistical information in the preamble, before my reflection. In the following weeks we heard from Joe Witte, who sits on the Missions and Social Concerns Committee, and joined our membership last year. And on the 3rd week we heard from Aaron Wynn, who also joined us last year. He and his wife, Alexis, are active in our Young Adult Fellowship and Bible Study. We are so grateful to them for their readiness to speak to us.

Preamble

Good morning. It is the beginning of November. The light and the leaves have changed, and I imagine many of you have given thought to Thanksgiving Day, and started making plans.

We have a tradition in this church that on Thanksgiving Sunday we all bring a food offering for a local shelter. During the service, the children go out into the pews and bring forward all the food to the altar. We bless the food, and after the service deliver it all to the shelter. It is a very visible and tangible offering.

So it is fitting that we begin our Stewardship program now, as we move through November, toward Thanksgiving. It is fitting that before we come to this most visible gesture, the gathering of food on the altar, that we enter a time of deeper consideration of what that gesture points to - It points to the recognition that all that we have comes from God, and that we return a portion in gratitude. This is at the heart of Stewardship.

We begin our Stewardship campaign now to take time to reflect on this in our own particular situation. Shortly, you will be receiving our Letter in the mail. It will include a pledge card and some thoughts on giving. Over the next 2 weeks we will hear reflections from members about what the church means to them, and why they give. Then on Pledge Sunday, November 17th, we bring our cards to the offering. The following Sunday, Thanksgiving Sunday, our Youth will lead the Thanksgiving celebration and offering of food - that final gesture of giving back.

Reflection

So let me begin with my reflection on why I come to Hyde Park Union Church and have been coming 35 years now.

There are 2 trajectories to trace, which are constantly mingling: one is the outer communal life, and the other is the inner life with God.

On one level, I come because my husband, Fred, who sings in the choir, invited me. We were not yet married at that time. I had been raised in an Episcopalian church, and had always been in choir, and so I came and sang. That was a wonderful, welcoming experience. I began to feel at home doing things like working in the kitchen and helping with Coffee hour. Then I taught some Sunday school, first grade and then a junior high class. And there was Bible study, and Second Hour discussions for small group exploration and expression, and sharing of thoughts and experiences.

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When our children were young there was Children's church, Animal Poetry and Pageants and plays. The children had a church family and friends. It was all organized around the Gospel teachings and thoughtful reading of scripture. If they were young now they would have Children's choir, and perhaps gain that great, whole- body experience of using mind, voice, heart all at once; joining with others, becoming one sound. That is an experience and training which has been such a blessing in my life.

Yet Intermingling with this visible strand, is the invisible life with God.

Over the course of these 35 years, my spiritual path has been sometimes clear, and at other times hidden - or even blocked. Sometimes I have been moved along as if caught in a very fast channel of water, and at other times I have felt as if I'd been left high and dry. But whatever my condition, the message from this pulpit has been able to speak to it... to comprehend it.

Sometimes I have thought 'If we really hear what is being said, how can we stay in our seats?'

And in fact, we have not stayed sitting. We have gone out of our sanctuary and found ways to help provide food and comfort and spiritual companionship to others.

So that is why I come, and why I give my time and money. I believe that here we have opportunity to practice the Gospel.

Joe Witte spoke to us on the following Sunday:

"Hyde Park Union Church is a truly caring and loving community that I am honored and humbled to be a part of. This isn't only through the strong community during Sunday worship - it is through the strong network of programs supported by that community such as the food pantry, which helps hundreds of families a month put food on the table.

The Hyde Park and Kenwood Hunger Programs, of which the food pantry is a part, are supported by your contributions, and by the contributions of fellow Hyde Park residents. Some of the impacts of these contributions are visible - for instance, the chili-making we meet for the first Sunday after the first Tuesday of every month. Others, such as the food pantry, are sometimes less visible, but no less impactful.

The food pantry serves around 30-40 households on a typical week, and even on a particularly slow week serves around 20 families. The pantry provides families

with everything from fresh fruits to turkeys to canned beans and vegetables. (And, every now and then, cookies - these are always popular!) The food pantry also makes a difference not just in magnitude, but in reliability - food insecurity is a huge problem in Chicago, and especially after the deep cuts in food stamps being able to have a source of food that is reliably there every Saturday - rain, snow, or polar vortex - makes an enormous difference in the ability of families in our community to know where their next meal is coming from.

So once again, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has helped support the hunger program - your contribution is making a difference. Thank you."

Aaron Wynn spoke on the 3rd Sunday:

"I am very humbled and honored to speak this morning regarding the importance of stewardship. After reflecting on this topic for several weeks, I immediately knew how to describe my personal relationship with God and the church as a thought provoking environment for my on-going spiritual development. This spiritual introspectiveness is definitely a quality I use in my line of work since I deal with interpersonal conflicts on a daily basis which requires me to serve as an advisor for individuals who are both physically and mentally vulnerable. Having this spiritual sense of clarity is the reason I look forward to church. I am thankful for Hyde Park Union Church for helping me understand and cultivate my spirituality. Since becoming a member, I have been an active participant in the Young Adult Fellowship group and other church activities which have all been rewarding experiences. For the past two months, the Young Adults group has been meeting regularly to discuss different passages of the Bible. For my wife and I, pledging will be an opportunity for us to give back to the church in appreciation of our many blessings. We are dedicated to the church advancement this is not just from a nominal standpoint but by providing our time and volunteering. In closing, I am asking my fellow members to support our church as we look to increase and continue our involvement in the Greater Chicago community. Thank you and God bless. "

Bible Studies at HPUC

Amanda Guthrie

Young Adult Bible Study

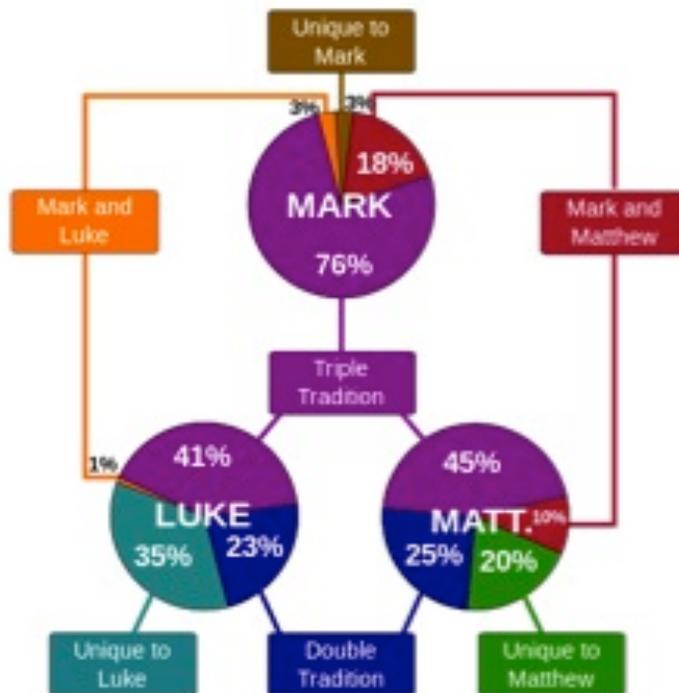
The Young Adult Bible Study meets every other week on Wednesday evenings from 6-8pm. We begin by eating a meal and catching up with one another. We then ease our way into conversation about the topic for the week. In the fall, we studied the book of Ecclesiastes. We read a chapter or two a week and began by sharing our impressions of the text. We often returned to the questions: How does the author's context affect his perspective? And does what the author has to say resonate with our lives today? When we finished Ecclesiastes, we began exploring topics of interest to members of the Bible Study – People We Learn From, Self Identity, and, coming up, Relationships and Belonging in Community. For these conversations, we may read scripture and articles and listen to short podcasts in advance, but our conversation mostly stems from our own experiences. This has given us an opportunity to learn more about each other and to articulate the role faith plays in our daily lives and interactions with others. If you're interested in learning more about Bible Study, please contact me or feel free to come to our next one – there is no need to have attended before.

Wednesday Afternoon Bible Study

Bible Study begins again on Wednesday, February 26 at 1pm. We will meet in the parlor and, through the Spring, we will read the synoptic gospels – Matthew, Mark, and Luke – together. These gospels most closely resemble one another. Their relationship to each other is still a matter of debate, though most scholars believe that Mark was the first gospel to be written and that the authors of Matthew & Luke had access to this text while writing their gospels. Matthew and Luke also share a number of stories not found in Mark, which many believe imply their mutual reliance on a fourth text, or Q. (See the diagram below for the relationship between these three gospels). Reading the synoptic gospels together will allow us to explore many questions: What do we make of the differences between the texts? The similarities? Why does one author emphasize certain points more than the others? Can we create one image of Jesus from the synoptic gospels? To answer these questions, we will have to closely explore the importance of perspective and agenda in Biblical writing. We will also have to learn a little about the genres of these texts and the audiences they were intended to reach. This promises to be a lively discussion, and I hope you will join us if you are able! The first time we meet, we will review a potential

reading schedule. I will make this available for everyone in case you would like to follow along.

Relationships between the Synoptic Gospels



Ashes & Candlelight

Ash Wednesday in the spirit of Taizé

Wednesday

March 5th

6:30pm



Heal Thyself

*An Interactive Discussion of
Trauma Stewardship
by Laura van Dernoot Lipsky*

March 9

Keynote Speaker

Carol Horton,

*author, yoga teacher, and co-founder of
Chicago's Socially Engaged
Yoga Network (SEYN)*

Sundays March 9-April 6

*Dean Susan Art * Rev. Betsy Ritzman * Rev. Wesley Sun * HPUC pastors*

11:30-12:30

**Children's choir looking for
volunteer accompanist/s (piano or
guitar)**

If interested, please contact Jade at jade@hpuc.org or speak to Jade Maze or Franci Acosta before or after worship.

Ninth Annual "Taste of Hyde Park"

a dinner and silent auction to benefit the Hyde Park Transitional Housing Project (HPTHP)

Where: St. Paul & the Redeemer Church
4945 S. Dorchester

When: Saturday, April 5, 2014 from 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Donations: \$35 in advance, \$40 at the door, \$25 for students with ID, \$15 for children ages 6-17, children ages 5 and under free (patrons contributing \$100 or more, paid in advance, will be recognized in the program)

Tickets: may be purchased before April 5 at www.hpthp.org or buying a ticket from Ginni Cook or Marlene Vellinga; ticket purchases can also be arranged by emailing hpthp@yahoo.com

HPTHP provides housing and mentoring services to homeless families for up to two years, helping them to achieve independent living. Founded in 2002 by the Hyde Park cluster of Interfaith Open Communities, HPTHP is supported by many Hyde Park and Kenwood congregations, individuals, and businesses and by the Hyde Park and Kenwood Interfaith Council.

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