

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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## May 2014

From the Senior Minister  
Rev. Susan Johnson

### May Church Calendar

**Friday, May 2**

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

**Sunday, May 4**

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

Annual Elections Meeting, 11:30 a.m.

**Wednesday, May 7**

Bible Study, 1:00 p.m.

**Thursday, May 8**

Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.

**Sunday, May 11**

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

Chili-making, 11:30 a.m.

**Wednesday, May 14**

Bible Study, 1:00 p.m.

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

**Thursday, May 15**

Senior Choir Rehearsal, 6:30 p.m.

**Saturday, May 17**

Memorial Service for Edlyn Freerks, 11:00 a.m.

**Sunday, May 18**

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

Animal Poetry, 11:30 a.m.

**Wednesday, May 21**

Bible Study, 1:00 p.m.

**Thursday, May 22**

Senior Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.

**Sunday, May 25**

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

**Monday, May 26**

**Church Office Closed in observance of Memorial Day**

**Wednesday, May 28**

Bible Study, 1:00 p.m.

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

**Thursday, May 29**

Senior Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.

### *Finding the Time to "Do Good"*

Reading a recent article in the *New York Times* on volunteerism, I was reminded of my first Thanksgiving as a pastor. In the week leading up to the holiday, I received three calls – all from elementary schools – asking where they could drop off canned goods they had collected for the poor. (In the intervening years, the question has become simpler. Now we are often asked if we can come pick donations up.) It takes a certain consciousness to know that there is suffering in the world, and another level to feel you should help ameliorate it. But finding ways to genuinely contribute to good in the world can be even more elusive. We want to teach our children compassion and yet we are not sure how to make something good happen ourselves. A teacher calling a church to see if we know where to find the poor is not at her best.

The article in the *New York Times* was more about mixing world travel and volunteerism. In some ways it was highlighting a mixture of motives – complete with descriptions of how intertwined compassion and generosity can be with voyeurism and moral superiority. We may want to help the poor, here or abroad, but *why* do we want to help them? Is it just so that we feel better about ourselves?

Part of our Christian Education curriculum is organized around service to others. We have our own holiday food drive for St. Martin de Porres women's and children's shelter, and our children make Thanksgiving cards for the children who live there. Our children make valentines for our older members. They put together dental hygiene kits for distribution through the food pantry and the soup kitchen. They sort clothing for the Gilead ministry. In late May, the children will put on their annual animal poetry reading, which gives them an opportunity to raise what they think of as a great deal of money, and to give it to an organization whose mission they study and support.

As valuable as all that is to our children – and arguably in service to the organizations they are serving – the most valuable work they do is the integration of these activities with their intellectual, emotional and spiritual lives. When we talk about the spiritual formation of our children, we are hoping to instill in them a kind of humility that wants to understand their own mixed motivations in helping, a devotion to the dignity of every person through which they will work to see the unintended consequences of charity, and a passion that will not settle for conventional ways of seeing problems or solutions.

The very best way to teach children is for us to be actively engaged in service ourselves, including them in the work as they grow in ability and concern.

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When we as adults cannot find a way to serve, or are too busy to do more than donate (and even then voice more skepticism than generosity), we are teaching our children. One of the best things about an active spiritual community is that there is almost always something good to do.

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## ***A Word of Thanks***

*Marlene Vellinga*

Many thanks to all who helped make the Transitional Housing Project's ninth annual "Taste of Hyde Park" a resounding success. Thanks to Willie Pickens for playing for us and to Jay Mulberry for putting our video in the "Good Neighbors" stratosphere. Thanks to all who bought tickets, contributed items to the silent auction, purchased silent auction items or donated money. So far we've made approximately \$10,292, about \$720 less than last year. Last year was the most successful year we've had, but this year wasn't far behind, and some proceeds may still come in.

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### **In Memoriam**

We mourn the death of **Edlyn Freerks**, on Palm Sunday, April 13. Edlyn would have been 91 years old on April 29. The cause of death was pneumonia. He is survived by two nephews in Virginia, and many good friends. Edlyn became a member of our church over sixty years ago, and sang in the church choir until 2012.

His memorial service will be **Saturday, May 17, at 11:00 a.m.**, with a luncheon following.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

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## ***"Do This in Remembrance of Me": First Sunday Communion at Jackson Park Hospital*** *Rev. Erma Y. Croom, Director of the Gilead Ministry*

Every first Sunday at Jackson Park Hospital, Gilead Ministry Chaplains offer communion to patients, family members and staff. First Sunday communion has often times served as the catalyst of some sacred grace-filled moments at Jackson Park. Recently, one of our staff chaplains had one of those moments. Jeffery Challberg was making his rounds on one of the units at the hospital and visited a room on the Monday after the first Sunday. The patients had received communion on the previous Sunday and were sharing with Jeffery the significance Holy Communion had for them. Jeffery reflecting on this encounter shared the following recollections:

I stopped in to one of the three person rooms on 2 East today. When I finished explaining myself and asked how she was doing, the woman in bed one responded that she felt great and was going home. "And it was one of you

chaplains that brought communion yesterday; within an hour it felt like my bones were coming together and my body was healing back up." The conversation broadened to include everyone in the room, they explained that after having communion (which I suppose signaled that they were all women of faith), they had held a small church service among themselves, reading scripture and singing hymns. Just before I arrived, the three women had been ministering to one of the technicians who is facing grief in her own personal life. All in all, a pretty amazing group of women and a pretty amazing moment of transformation from "patients" to "church" to "caregivers" themselves, even while still in the hospital. So, two major events happened with communion at the center: one woman's sense of healing and the spontaneous formation of a little church in the room, caring for its own, ministering to others. It was a great moment.



*He took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me. 20 After supper he took another cup of wine and said, "This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you. (Luke 22:19 & 20 NLT)*

Reflecting on Jeffery's encounter with these "amazing" women reminds me of the words of the late Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz in her book *La Lucha Continues: Mujerista Theology*. She wrote, "In order for a communion between persons to exist we not only need to articulate words. We also need someone to listen to the words, someone who will reverently and with great honesty receive our words."<sup>2</sup> I am thankful that Chaplain Jeffery was there for these women in a way that confirms that he indeed "listened" to their words, "reverently" received them and then shared them with all of us. Chaplain Jeffery's experience indicates that God's presence was indeed in their midst. It also indicates the significance of the Gilead Ministry and how the various services this ministry provides continue to make a difference. And like the patients and staff at Jackson Park Hospital the Chaplains also look forward to first Sunday Communion, not only for its significance to the patients, family members and staff, but also for its significance for our own lives.

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## Animal Poetry

Amanda Guthrie

Every year, our students spend the first few weeks of May memorizing poems to share with the congregation during Second Hour on the third Sunday of the month. We call this event Animal Poetry, and, during it, we raise money for Heifer International. Heifer International's mission is to work with communities to end world hunger and poverty and to care for the Earth. The students will tell you all about Heifer International's start and work during the Animal Poetry Event. In addition to spending Sunday School memorizing poetry, the students will learn about Heifer International and consider how their practices align with the Christian call and commitment to serve. We'll read from 1 Corinthians 12, considering especially the notion that when one member of the body suffers, all suffer, and when one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Planning Animal Poetry gives students the opportunity to reflect on the relevance of the Biblical message today and leading it allows them to articulate that message in a creative and fun way. In doing this, students also work toward many of the goals the Christian Education Committee has established for them. By 4<sup>th</sup> grade, we hope students understand how their actions reflect Biblical themes and that they feel called and empowered to serve. By 5<sup>th</sup> grade, we hope students understand how the church serves and are involved, and by 7<sup>th</sup> grade, we hope students know themselves as servant leaders. To help meet these goals, our students have many opportunities to serve and lead throughout the year and to bring their faith to life by sharing what they're learning. We hope this reflects how important are children and youth are to the life of this church and how much we can learn from them. Please join us as they lead us again in the Second Hour on the 18<sup>th</sup>!

## Will you be at Animal Poetry?



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## Aah! It's Alive!

Jade Maze

As I reflect on the various artists we've had as guests on our sacred jazz services, I'm happy that we as a congregation are getting the opportunity to witness the diversity that is jazz music, from our own Willie Pickens to the Pakistani/Chilean influenced stylings of guitarist Fared Haque. Indeed, what is jazz? Here are a few of the widespread definitions:

According to Wynton Marsalis, jazz is music that swings. According to Pat Metheny, jazz is not the music of Kenny G. According to Webster's, jazz is characterized by propulsive syncopated rhythms, polyphonic ensemble playing, varying degrees of improvisation, and often deliberate distortions of pitch and timbre.

Certainly, the question is a highly subjective one. Ask 100 different people "What is jazz?" and you're likely to get 100 different answers. The debate becomes even more confusing given the fact that the history of jazz is relatively well documented.

It's no secret that jazz music started in the black ghettos of New Orleans at the end of the 19th century where African and European musical traditions fused. In the 1920s jazz moved up river to St. Louis, then to Chicago and New York as African Americans migrated north in search of a better life. The 1930s saw the evolution of swing bands like those led by Duke Ellington and Count Basie. At the same time great soloists emerged, virtuosi like Louis Armstrong, Coleman Hawkins and Lester Young. In the 1940s bebop hit, personified in the music of Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. The "Mozart" of his day, Charlie "Bird" Parker took all of the melodic and harmonic information available and crystallized it into bebop.

Subsequently, after Bird took bebop to its logical conclusion, musicians like Miles Davis and Ornette Coleman invented new forms like modal playing and "free" jazz. In the 1960s musicians began incorporating R&B, rock and new electric instruments into their jazz. John Coltrane gave us "sheets of sound." The Modern Jazz Quartet mixed jazz and classical music. Everything exploded and suddenly jazz was all over the place.

In their effort to market these musical voyages, major record companies have added to the mystification, bombarding us with labels to ponder: Contemporary jazz, mainstream jazz, smooth jazz, alternative jazz, avant-garde jazz, Latin jazz, fusion, etc. At present, it seems that there are almost as many names for jazz as there are jazz groups.

You name it; it's out there. It seems all one can agree on is that jazz is a living breathing art form in a continual state of morphing. Today, its influence envelops the globe. It's expressive. It's enriching. Call it what you like—jazz is here to stay.

In a 1988 interview, trombonist J. J. Johnson said, "Jazz is restless. It won't stay put, and it never will." I'm glad our native art form is restless. Looking forward to hearing a few more sacred variations this summer.

## Mother's Day for Jackson Park Hospital

Please remember to bring layette items and cash donations to church on May 11 for the Gilead Ministry. Layettes will be assembled during Coffee Hour for distribution to new moms at Jackson Park Hospital throughout the year.

### **Items needed include:**

blankets  
receiving blankets  
sleepers  
onesies  
hats  
bibs  
socks



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