

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
5600 South Woodlawn Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60637
phone 773.363.6063 • fax 773.324.3874
www.hpuc.org • office@hpuc.org



December 2014

From the Senior Minister
Rev. Susan Johnson

December Church Calendar

Mondays, 7 p.m. - Yoga and Centering Prayer (except December 29)

Wednesdays, 1 p.m. - Bible Study

Thursdays, 7:30 p.m. - Senior Choir Rehearsal (except December 25)

Friday, December 5
Taizé Worship, 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 7
Second Sunday of Advent
Worship with Communion and Remembrance of Chicago's Fallen Children and Youth, 10:00 a.m., Rev. Susan Johnson preaching

Second Hour: Discussion on *Dying to Live: A Migrant's Journey*

Sunday, December 14
Third Sunday of Advent
Worship with Children's Advent Pageant, 10:00 a.m.

Chili-making, 11:30 a.m.

Christmas Caroling at Jackson Park Hospital, 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 21
Fourth Sunday of Advent
Worship, 10:00 a.m., Rev. Susan Johnson preaching

Christmas Sing-Along, 11:30 a.m.

Wednesday, December 24
Church Office closes at noon

Christmas Eve Service, 5:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 25
Church Office closed in observance of Christmas

Friday, December 26
Church Office closed in observance of Christmas

Sunday, December 28
Worship, 10:00 a.m., Rev. Susan Johnson preaching

Where Incarnation and Immigration Meet

When Mike Nichols, the brilliant film and theatre director, died last week, Bruce Weber of the *New York Times* credited Nichols' brilliance to his life experience as an immigrant. "Critics speculated that Mr. Nichols's portrayals of American life were especially shrewd because he came to this country as a boy, felt alienated and never lost his outsider's point of view," Weber wrote. Nichols' father and mother, originally from Russia and Germany respectively, were Jewish and living in Germany as Hitler came to power. Nichols, his father and brother fled Berlin in 1938, when he was seven. He arrived in the United States with no English and no hair (he had been rendered bald as a child by a reaction to a vaccine). His mother, who had been ill in Germany, joined them in the U.S. in 1941, and his father died the following year. Later to become the award-winning director of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *The Graduate*, *Catch 22*, *Silkwood*, *Working Girl*, *The Birdcage*, *Primary Colors*, and *Charlie Wilson's War*, among many other films and plays, Nichols was also a promoter of others – he brought Dustin Hoffman out of under-employment and obscurity, and discovered Whoopi Goldberg (at that time a street performer in NYC).

Mike Nichols (originally Mikhail Igor Peschkowski) was an immigrant, a child refugee. And we are so proud of him, we think of him as "one of our own," even while we imagine that it is the very experience of not being one of us that gave him his director's eye. Yet, when we look at the *DREAMERS* whose illegal immigration as children has been deferred by the Dream Act because they were brought here, too, as children by their parents, we may not see them with even a hint of their promise. It is true that they were brought here illegally, but we are also talking about an immigration "system" that is broken – a system that is porous and inviting, and yet punitive and inhumane; a system that is horribly back-logged, and also manages to be imperious and rash; a system that is both injudicious and byzantine.

And I rehearse all of that as we enter the season of Advent because it is the season of the Incarnation. Emmanuel means "God With Us," and Advent is the season in which we celebrate the Son of God living among us *as one of us*. And yet Jesus didn't arrive with a passport or a royal title. Born in a stable to poor peasant parents, he was proclaimed by nomadic shepherds and the night sky. He became a refugee at the age of two. Moreover, he belonged to a tribe of people who migrated on faith, people who later escaped slavery by wandering through the wilderness, people for whom hospitality to strangers was a commandment and the difference between life and death.

On Sunday, December 7, we will see a 30-minute documentary, *Dying to Live: A Migrant's Journey*, by Notre Dame Professor of Latin American Studies, Fr. Daniel Groody, which presents a theology of immigration through the lenses of Incarnation, Hospitality, and Eucharist. We as Christians are drawn into political

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debates about immigration, as all Americans are, and yet we possess an impoverished theological foundation for our own discussion, even though it raises basic questions about identity, justice, compassion and mercy.

Professor Groody's brother and sister, who collaborated with Fr. Groody on the film, are themselves an award-winning film documentarian and screenwriter, respectively; it is a good film and it should lead to a great conversation about the intersection of our Christian values with one of the very important issues of our day.

In writing this column, I have enjoyed the fact that Mike Nichols went to the University of Chicago (and referred to his time there as "paradise"), and I have particularly enjoyed that he was such a fine filmmaker and this was a column about a film. But I am most of all pleased to have found a resource on immigration that begins theologically. After all, it is Advent and we are in America.

In Memoriam

We are deeply saddened by the sudden death of Marlene Vellinga, who suffered an aneurism while driving to a concert with friends on November 22nd. Fortunately, her friends brought the vehicle under control and there was no accident. Marlene, who was 79, had been a member of the church for over twenty years. She had retired from the University of Chicago Law School, where she had served on the staff. She had been active in President Obama's campaigns, and was still very active in the community, especially with the Hyde Park & Kenwood Hunger Programs and the Hyde Park Transitional Housing Project. She was an avid runner and cyclist, and was seen riding in the neighborhood just days before she died. Her memorial service was held on November 29th at Hyde Park Union. Her family has asked that any memorial donations go to the HPTHP.

"Tis the Season"

Rev. Erma Croom, Director of the Gilead Ministry

There is a hint of anticipation in the air at Jackson Park Hospital these days, as the holiday season approaches. A holiday wreath has appeared in the east lobby and pretty soon the whole hospital will be bursting with the colorful, glistening sites of Christmas. Christmas is a big thing at Jackson Park Hospital! Amazingly decorated doors, units and nurses' stations, Christmas trees, lights, bows and stockings will soon be part of the hospital scenery. Hyde Park Union Church and Gilead Ministry will take part in the holiday festivities again this year with our Annual Christmas Caroling event, Sunday, December 14th, 4-6:30p.m. Cookies for staff will be delivered on Christmas Eve. Since this is my first Christmas as Director of Gilead Ministry and Spiritual Care here at Jackson Park Hospital, I am excited about joining in the celebration and getting into the holiday spirit that is so much a part of the ethos of Jackson Park Hospital. The Gilead Ministry staff and I also appreciate the opportunity to

continue our pastoral care ministry throughout the Christmas Holiday for patients, family and staff who will have to celebrate the holidays in the hospital. Also, thanks to the generous contributions of members of Hyde Park Union Church, we will also continue to provide donated coats, scarf's, hats, and other winter items for patients throughout the holiday season and winter months.

Our Blessings

Amanda Guthrie

It was truly a blessing to help the students prepare for Youth Sunday, and watch them as they led worship. They are each so smart and insightful, and it is an honor to witness them grow into the people God is calling them to be. Their leading the adults in worship is an important aspect of not only their formation but ours. It is important for us to take the time to see the world through their eyes. When we do this, they help us see Bible stories anew and to think in new ways about God's role in our lives, God's relationship to us.

On Youth Sunday, they helped us think about the ways in which God has blessed us and challenged us to consider how we might share our blessings. In this holiday season, commercial entities beg us to consider what we lack so we might purchase it for ourselves and others; theirs is a model of scarcity. On Youth Sunday, the students asked us to consider our abundance.

The examples the students gave us of their abundance were impressive. Their blessings include material things (like toys and the ability to travel), talents (like playing the violin and running quickly), and innate qualities (like personality, imagination and a love of the Bible). Their desire to share these different gifts manifest Paul's description of the body of Christ - that though many, we are one. Though it is certainly the case that there are many among us in need, we all have something to give. Together, we hold each other up. We compose the body of Christ, so that "If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it."

Below are some of the ways in which the adult members of the congregation are blessed, the things in life for we are grateful. Thank you for sharing:

Family, friends, neighbors, church, the ability and opportunity to help others, life, shelter, health, love, employment, Bible, music, time, energy, Earth, storytelling, expertise, the ability to listen, second chances, and third and fourth ones.

May we recall our blessings and share them with those who may be in need of what we possess, so that we might all rejoice together not only through this holiday season but also throughout the new year.

Healing Music

Jade Maze

Season greetings, HPUC congregation! In response to your many inquiries, our young soloist on Sunday was 10-year-old Miguel Calderon, one of our vocal interns. He sings in the children's choir and we will hear more from him as a soloist in the near future. Please join the senior choir in the parlor during second hour on, Sunday, December 21st for caroling and a large dose of Christmas cheer. A good time will be had by all!

As we enter into the anticipation of Advent, and are faced with the different forms of change and loss our church is experiencing right now, I thought you might like these thoughts by an anonymous author:

Even before King David, the kings of old must have employed musicians to soothe and heal them during times of stress and illness. The healing power of music has been expressed throughout the centuries, from the strumming of ancient harps and flutes, to the pure voice sung in chants and folk songs. Music has no bounds when it creates the sounds to heal and mellow the soul. Its legacy survives every generation through history and is expressed through the hearts and deeper feelings in the people from almost every culture, ancient and modern. Sound and music coupled with a pure heart and clear soul activates the principles of healing.

Our world without music of any kind or genre is inconceivable. A planet absent of music as a healing force would be equally unthinkable. Our Earth has given birth to singers, musicians and composers who have attained mastery in the art of healing music, from the olden days, throughout the centuries, right up to our time. To name a few: David, Solomon, Arion, Sappho, Terpander, the inventor of the 7 stringed Kithara, Tibetan Buddhist chants, Zen Shakuhachi music, ancient native American flute, Plainchant, Renaissance choral music, English and Irish folk songs, Monteverdi, Josquin des Prez, Bach, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Faure, Debussy, Ravel, Aboriginal, Hawaiian, Andean, Scriabin, Gurchiev, Hazrat Inayat Khan, ancient and modern Chinese healing music, Balinese, Javanese, and a host of contemporary composers from around the world are but a few from the galaxy of unknown musical artists who have contributed to the creation and playing of - music for health, healing, and spiritual enrichment.

And what distinguishes "healing music" from other musical forms? In one word: SPIRITUALITY. In a few words: music created from the soul to and for the soul.

In a paragraph: Music aimed toward a healing effect: a mother singing a lullaby to a sick or tired child; a young boy playing soft guitar music for his ailing father; woman playing lyrical piano music for her grandmother; the gentle strumming of the harp, the plaintive sound of a flute echoing through the mountains; a cappella choral music sung in a

cathedral; the digeridoo sound-power of a priest; a solo violinist singing out a great human voice through five strings, an orchestra playing Vaughan-William's "Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis"; Segovia playing the guitar; Bill Evans playing the piano; the Beatles singing "All You Need is Love"...

Yet, what is healing to some is not healing to others. And what is healing today may be not healing yesterday. It matters not who or what is in vogue; all that is important is the fact there exists music which is therapeutic, spiritually uplifting, quieting, relaxing, energizing, life-affirming, positive, beautiful, healing, awakening, soul-searching, metaphysical and based upon the affirmation of love as a active principle within every note and phrase as they pass through the hearing and enter the human experience. When ...when we reach a musical catharsis, no matter what our taste...where we are moved to absolute tears, we are experiencing music of a healing nature. And we are ennobled, enriched, and transformed.

The transformative power of music has been recognized throughout history, in all cultures and all peoples. Sound emitted through air into the hearing reaches into our hearts and vitalizes our nerves, tension is reduced and often vanishes. We are refreshed, rejuvenated and attain a higher power of concentration which leads to a greater fulfillment and even a revelation. Music that does this, regardless of style, may be considered "healing", healthful, curative, therapeutic, resonating with the spirit, and charged with the ability to be visionary and enlightening. Nothing can replace it. And the only substitute may be prayer, meditation, spiritual revelation, and awareness of the supreme essence at work as an active principle in the cosmos.

Perhaps the music of nature may substitute for the art of sound. The falling of water, the crashing of waves, a nightingale singing in the echoing forest, the sound of wind through leaves, the trickle of a brook, and water moving around the stones in streams, tall grasses rustling in a breeze, and the sound of absolute silence in a desert, the felt sound of one's heartbeat—these are some of the natural healing sounds—the lapping of the lake shore, a chorus of birds, the silence of snow falling onto snow, and the music of rain out the window and even the mighty crack of thunder in the distance...

Or the singing of the Humpback whale, the frogs in the pond, cicadas in the fields, and myriad sounds of insects blending with birdcalls. The crashing of a waterfall into a churning pool, river rapids, the staccato of a woodpecker, the chirping of monkeys, a wolf in the wilderness, Beluga Whales singing like canaries, and the dolphins whistling bursts of aquatic sounds deep within the waters and into the air. The Fin whale's deep amplitude communicating over far distances, and the purring of a cat vibrating throughout one's body. These are just a few of the sounds of nature. The rustling of autumn leaves, an owl's hoot, hummingbird wings, and a flower whirling through air, touching down on a pond where the sound of ripples vanish into thin air.

In these few words may be found the sources for music as a healing principle in our daily lives. And no matter how it manifests in our hearing, music has the power to reach into our very core and extract from us, the deepest feelings, the farthest insights, and the most profound thoughts from our minds and hearts. The divinely inspired musical artist ignites our selves into a greater awareness. The sequence of natural sounds reawakens that place of beauty within us long forgotten. The most finely tuned bells, chimes, gongs and drums exchange confusion for harmony. And the greatest of choirs can elevate our souls to the regions of cosmic consciousness.

Healing music is limitless in its ability to transform the listener to a heightened state of awareness. And just to imagine the music of the spheres, the sounds in the stars, can bring us to nirvana where we can die and be reborn into even greater human beings, evolved by our keen awareness into a finer person, a loving human being, and a more highly conscious Human Being.

Talking to Others About Church, Part II

Pamela Mearsheimer



Talking to other people about church is such an important topic; this is my second article on the subject. Here are a few more pointers:

- 1) It's not about you
- 2) All you are doing is having a conversation

Here's an easy conversation starter: "Do you go to church?"

Here's how a person might answer:

- Yes, I go to ----- church
- No, I'm Jewish/Muslim/Buddhist, etc. I don't go to church.
- I used to go to XYZ church, when I was a kid/when I lived in Minneapolis/before I got divorced/before ABC event/ etc.

Any of those responses is an easy conversation starter. Just ask questions, be curious.

Here's why you should ask:

- Just because a person goes to another church, does not mean they are happy with their church. Or their

church might be inconveniently located. Or something. Maybe they want to take a look at your church sometime? They might be curious.

- If someone went to church in the past they might be curious to try out church again. Why not try out your church?
- If they went to church in the past and had a negative experience – ask them about it. What didn't they like? Maybe things are different at HPUC?

You will never know anything if you don't ask. Don't have a pre-set agenda, just be curious.

You never know who might want to try out church again and is just waiting for someone to ask.

Your invitation may be the answer to someone's prayers!

Gilead Ministry Winter Clothing Drive

Gilead Ministry is now receiving donations of clothing items for the winter for patients who are in need of them on the Behavioral Medicine Unit at Jackson Park Hospital. Items may include coats, jackets, sweaters, gloves, hats, etc.



Persons wanting to donate may bring their clothing items to the church or call Rev. Erma at the Gilead Ministry at 773-947-7608 to schedule a pick-up.

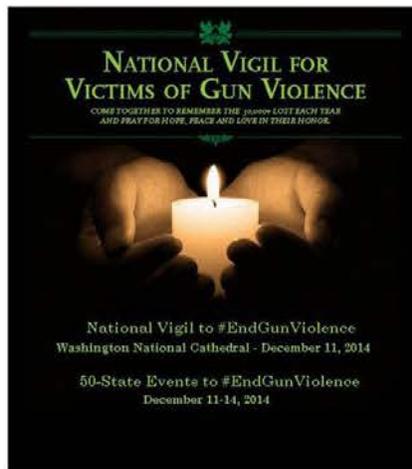


Cookies for Jackson Park Hospital

On or shortly before December 24, please bring homemade Christmas cookies to Hyde Park Union Church.

The cookies will be placed at the nurses' stations for all hospital staff who work Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.





**Gun Violence is a plague in our country and it's time we
#EndGunViolence.**

Join Us In Remembrance

In the 2 years since Newtown shootings, more than 60,000 Americans nationwide will have died from gunshot wounds-including over 800 in Chicago alone. *We are all affected by gun violence.* Enough is Enough. Please join us in a vigil to remember those we have lost and demand not more!

Chicago Citizens for Change, The Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence and Purpose Over Pain are partnering with the Newtown Foundation, Washington National Cathedral, States United to Prevent Gun Violence and Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence to remember all victims of gun violence
#EndGunViolence.

**Thursday, December 11, 2014
6:30-8:00 PM**

**Roosevelt University
430 S. Michigan Ave
Chicago, IL 60605**

Keynote Speaker: Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County Board President



FAITHS UNITED
TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE



STATES UNITED
TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE
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YAF CHRISTMAS PARTY

Saturday, December 6, 7:00 p.m.

Talk to Pastor Amanda for details!

Join Us for Taizé Worship

December 5
7 p.m.



December 14

Worship with Children's Advent Pageant

Christmas Caroling at Jackson Park Hospital

December 21

Christmas Sing-Along during Second Hour



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