

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
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February 2015

February Church Calendar

Sunday, February 1

Worship with Communion, 10:00 a.m., Rev. Dr. Douglas R. Sharp preaching

Coffee Hour, 11:30 a.m.

Second Hour: Dialogue with Douglas, 11:30 a.m.

Monday, February 2

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

Wednesday, February 4

Bible Study, 1:00 p.m.

Thursday, February 5

Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, February 6

Taizé Worship, 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 8

Worship with Remembrance of Chicago's Fallen Children and Youth, 10:00 a.m., Amanda Guthrie preaching

Chili-making and Advocacy, 11:30 a.m.

Plarn-making, 11:30 a.m.

Monday, February 9

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

Thursday, February 12

Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, February 15

Worship, Rev. Dr. Douglas R. Sharp preaching

Coffee Hour, 11:30 a.m.

Monday, February 16

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

Ash Wednesday, February 18

Lent Begins
Service of Ashes and Candlelight, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, February 19

Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, February 22

Worship, 10:00 a.m., Rev. Douglas Sharp preaching

Coffee Hour, 11:30 a.m.

Second Hour Lenten Series: Prayer, 11:30 a.m.

Monday, February 23

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

Wednesday, February 25

Bible Study, 1:00 p.m.

Thursday, February 26

Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.

From the Interim Minister

Douglas R. Sharp

Non-Random Thoughts

My heart is warmed by how gracious and welcoming people have been in the few weeks that I've been at Hyde Park Union Church. I am so very grateful for the atmosphere of openness and acceptance here, a little charmed by the glint of curiosity at this newcomer among you, and greatly encouraged by the eagerness to engage in conversation about interests and histories.

There is a rich mixture of personal narratives that make up this community. Each person and family brings a constellation of experiences that both offers something to contribute and an opening to receive from others. It is intriguing to behold how people give and receive, nurture and support, challenge and inspire one another in the midst of wonderful diversity.

During these days of living "in-between" the time now past when one leader served this congregation, and the time not yet present when a new one will arrive, there remain opportunities to move forward with deliberate care and concern in expressing our commitment to be a loving community of mutuality.

Hyde Park Union Church is a spiritual and social community, a network of relations and commitments, values and convictions, that we can foster in love and appreciation for our diversity. We are not all the same but we are all important; we do not all think alike, but all of us think, and no one's views are more important than anyone else's. Committing to that is one thing; delivering it is another.

We face some possibilities and challenges ahead, and yes, even some threats to our community. This period when we find ourselves in a liminal situation, an odd and disquieting time of *neither/nor*, is nonetheless a time for pausing and probing the core of the community and the boundaries that demarcate our spiritual and physical spaces. This probing will take many forms and occur in many arenas of the congregation's life, but I believe that in all cases, it will consist of conversations—both formal and informal—and processes that are intended to issue in new insight and expand the capacity of this spiritual community to a beacon of transformation, justice and peace.

In the weeks and months ahead, we will find opportunity to inquire into some of the most basic questions a community can ask: Who are we, who do we wish to become, and how do we wish to be known? Why do we constitute ourselves as a community, and what value and significance do we bring to our neighborhood and the larger community?

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My intent is to work with the congregation's staff and leaders to develop a plan to go forward, mindfully and productively, during this period of in-between. Together with these, we will explore and find ways to be a responsible and responsive church and to position the congregation to search for and secure its next permanent minister.

My hope is that we will recognize that this is our opportunity to show the larger community that Hyde Park Union Church was not an accident, but that we are a community of intention by the grace of a loving and compassionate God. As another Illinois president once said in difficult times, let us work collaboratively, and may our minds and hearts and spirits be "again touched ... by the better angels of our nature."

A Day of Ashes at Jackson Park Hospital *Rev. Erma Y. Croom, Director of the Gilead Ministry*

On February 18th Gilead Ministry at Jackson Park Hospital will observe Ash Wednesday. The observance of Ash Wednesday, marking the beginning of the Lenten season, has become a tradition at Jackson Park Hospital and will include a brief service in the chapel and the imposition of ashes throughout the hospital. Ash Wednesday, in addition to being a time of introspection and repentance, is also a time to remember our mortality in the context of Jackson Park Hospital. Just think of the significance of "A Day of Ashes" that takes place in a setting where, as the result of illness and or injury, patients, family members and medical staff are faced daily with the limitations of life; where end of life concerns are very much a part of the day to day work of the hospital. Sometimes, Gilead chaplains are called to provide support to families whose loved ones have passed. This is a critical aspect of the service Gilead Ministry chaplains provide. Even in circumstances where people are confronted with suffering and even death, Gilead Ministry at Jackson Park Hospital endeavors to bring comfort, hope, healing, and the possibility of renewal. Therefore, Ash Wednesday while reminding us of our mortality also reminds us to embrace life and the relationships that enrich and add significance to our lives every day. Ash Wednesday is an opportunity to renew our relationship with God and with each other. It is a day that challenges us to appreciate the many gifts and blessing of life even when we are contemplating the inevitable reality of death.

Prayer *Amanda Guthrie*

During the season of Lent, Christians intentionally turn back to God; we ask for forgiveness and seek ways to renew our relationships with God, ourselves, and one another. Many people do this by fasting or giving up a distracting part of their day, like watching television or playing on Facebook. Others take on a new spiritual practice, like reading the

Bible daily or praying more regularly. It can be difficult to stick with our commitments during this time, though, without the support of a community or without guidance from a trusted source. So this year, during the Second Hour in the season of Lent, we will explore prayer together. You may decide that you will take the time during Lent to engage in a more robust prayer life. Or you may simply be curious about various ways to communicate with God. Either way, we hope you will join us after worship from February 22nd – March 22nd. During this time, we will both learn more about different methods of prayer, and we will also engage in the practice of praying together.

Neither the American Baptist Church nor the United Church of Christ has a collection of pre-scripted prayer. The Book of Common Prayer, so beloved in the Episcopalian community, provides daily prayers and prayers for a number of different occasions. The Lutheran Book of Prayer does the same. In the Catholic Church, there are also written prayers; these are often memorized, to be spoken whenever the need, whatever it is, arises. In our traditions, prayer is, more often than not, extemporaneous, reflecting the joys and concerns of the individual or community in a particular and unique moment. Of course, scripted prayer in other denominations is not the only source of prayer for their members, either. In fact, the Catholic church is a rich resource for creative ways to communicate with God. During our Second Hour Series, we will explore Centering Prayer, Lectio Divina, and Ignatian Prayer.

In Centering Prayer, one practices detaching oneself from one's thoughts to rest in the presence of God, who is always with us. This practice is aided by the choice of a sacred word, like God, Spirit, Jesus, Trust, Love, Peace, etc. When one feels oneself getting caught up in a thought or distracted by a physical sensation, one simply repeats this word and rests in God. When a person is able to find this state, he or she contemplates God – gazing upon God silently and fully. In Lectio Divina, we pray the scriptures. During Lectio Divina, we listen to the text as if in conversation with God, noticing if there are any particular words or phrases that are speaking to us. The method of Lectio Divina includes reading, reflecting, responding, and resting. Ignatius of Loyola is perhaps most famous for writing *The Spiritual Exercises*. The two methods of prayer he teaches in *The Spiritual Exercises* are meditation and contemplation. Like Lectio Divina, contemplation entails praying through scripture. But in the *Exercises*, one uses all of one's senses to bring the story to life. After reflection, one encounters Jesus and shares whatever has come up for oneself in this process.

In addition to these three practices, we will also explore Labyrinth prayer, or walking prayer, and the Lord's Prayer. A labyrinth is a metaphor for life. It is a journey to the center, to God, but there are lots of twists and turns along the way. Sometimes we walk in what appears to be the right direction, but then we turn back again. Sometimes we encounter others. We may help or impede their process, and they ours. When walking a labyrinth, one can come into

God's presence through any number of methods – meditation, repeating a scripture, or praying the Lord's Prayer. We could spend a number of weeks thinking together about the Lord's Prayer. We read it in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, though it appears in different forms in each. And in neither place does it appear in the form we use today. By the time the Didache was written, at the latest by the second century, it does appear in its final form. In our final week of the series, we will discuss the history of the Lord's Prayer, its use in worship, and its meaning for our lives today.

We hope you will join us during this season, for what promises to be a meaningful and rich journey to deepen our relationship with God, ourselves, and one another.

It is LEEAP Year at Hyde Park Union Church! *Jade Maze*

Good news, HPUC congregation! Our hard work has paid off. In anticipation of the soon ending alternative worship money (from the Lilly grant) we were using to fund our jazz services, it has weighed heavy on my mind as to how to continue the tradition we have started here at HPUC with the Sacred Jazz. Pastor Susan and I kept our eyes open for possible financial support, and she sent me an email with the UCC (United Church of Christ) announcement of the LEEAP grant application, and the heading "possible money...?" I looked into it and decided to give it a try. I put together the proposal of the vision and Susan gave it a name and supplied all the nuts and bolts church information. We went over the final application together and sent it off with a prayer and a song back on September first.

I became worried as we continued to talk about budget concerns both in the services and during second hour. We still hadn't heard anything at the beginning of December, so I called the grant committee, and they told me we would know in early January. When we didn't hear anything by January 10th, I thought all was lost.

On January twelfth, I received a one-line e-mail that the grant committee would like to meet with us, though they didn't say why. I became cautiously hopeful and we set up an appointment for the upcoming Wednesday. We met on January 14th with the grant committee's chair and head of finance, myself, Pastor Susan, our moderator Sophie and our interim Pastor Douglas. I could barely contain my excitement during the meeting and was having a tendency to answer their questions before they finished asking them. I was also thrilled that the poster of the Willie Pickens Sacred Jazz Service was there bigger than life as they walked up to the church. We gave them a list of who has been performing here, a couple of Willie's CDs and the history of jazz at the church from Jazz Christmas concerts to present.

On the evening of Tuesday, January twentieth, I was informed by the chair herself that our program proposal was voted on favorably by the LEEAP Committee! We won't know exactly how much we will receive until mid-February when it is made official by the conference Council, but we will indeed receive something. Thank you God! Praise the Lord! I am thrilled about the future of our music ministry at Hyde Park Union Church. I'll keep you posted!

More about the grant:

ILLINOIS CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST LOCAL EVANGELISM, ENVISIONING AND PLANTING/LEEAP 2015

Our Conference Local Evangelism, Envisioning and Planting/LEEAP extends to our churches and associations an opportunity to request funding (in the form of loans and grants) for new church starts and the revitalization of existing congregations.

A revitalization project must provide a clear and compelling vision of how it will aid the church in discerning and/or implementing what God is calling the church to be and to do that is new and innovative. LEEAP does the evangelistic mission of the church through new church development and the revitalization of existing churches.

We're Updating Our Directory!

Please contact the church office at office@hpuc.org and provide us with:

Your name(s)

Your child(ren)'s name(s)

Your mailing address

Your phone number

Your email address

*One email per household will suffice. Even if your information has not changed, please **do** send your same information to the office as confirmation. If you would rather not be included in the new edition of the church directory, please send an email to the church office saying so.*

**Join us for Taizé
Worship on Friday,
February 6 at 7 p.m.**



**Lent begins on
Ash Wednesday,
February 18**



**Ashes & Candlelight Service
6:30 p.m**

Hyde Park Union Church
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