

*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



## May 2016

### May Church Calendar

#### Regular Weekly Events:

**Mondays** - Yoga & Centering Prayer, 7:00 p.m.  
**except May 30**

**Wednesdays** - Bible Study, 1:00 p.m. **except May 18 & May 25**

**Thursdays** - Senior Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.  
-----

#### Sunday, May 1

Worship with Communion, 10:00 a.m.

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

Second Hour: Dr. Shanti Elliott on "Education for Democracy in a Pluralist Society: Engaging the Fundamental Dynamics in Forming Young People for Life and Leadership", 11:30 a.m.

#### Friday, May 6

Taizé Worship, 7:00 p.m.

#### Sunday, May 8

Sacred Jazz Worship featuring the Charles Heath Quartet, 10:00 a.m.

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

Layette Assembly in Support of the Gilead Ministry at Jackson Park Hospital, 11:30 a.m.

Chili-making, 11:30 a.m.

Church Board Meeting, 12:00 p.m.

#### Sunday, May 15

Worship, 10:00 a.m.

Farewell Luncheon for Rev. Douglas and Linda Sharp, 11:30 a.m.

Congregational Meeting, 12:00 p.m.

#### Sunday, May 22

Worship, 10:00 a.m.

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

#### Sunday, May 29

Worship, 7:30 a.m.

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

#### Monday, May 30

**Church Office Closed in Observance of**

**From the Interim Minister  
Douglas R. Sharp**

### *Non-Random Thoughts*

Most people familiar with the Christian tradition are familiar with the saying, "Love your neighbor as yourself"—it's one of the two Great Commandments taught by Jesus. But many are not aware that this commandment comes from the book of Leviticus (19:18) in the Hebrew Scriptures and that its intent was to secure a just, compassionate and humane society, patterned after the laws of God and the covenant between Yahweh and Israel.

Many who identify themselves as Christian are also unaware that there is yet another commandment in the Hebrew Scriptures, one that addresses the presence of the foreigner in the community of Israel: "The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God" (Lev. 19:34).

I sometimes wish that Jesus had given us three "Great Commandments."

As I have been suggesting in my sermon series on compassion, our ability to be compassionate toward others requires that we have the capacity to relate to their suffering and to act in ways to bring some measure of relief. I think this ability presupposes that we have recognized and acknowledged both our own humanity as well as the humanity of "the other." What makes us human, in part, are our relationships and the environments we create to contain them. Each of us is born into a sociocultural world that has been made by others, and while we may contribute to it during the course of our personal sojourn, it will remain behind for others when we have passed on. The world we inhabit is a product of human activity, and in turn, we human beings are shaped by the world we and our predecessors have built. It seems to me, then, that the "essence" of our humanity can be seen to be the relationships with others that engender mutual formation and that make flourishing possible.

If relationships constitute the essence of what it means to be human, we must also reckon with the fact that the social, political, economic, religious and cultural forms in which these relationships emerge and become embedded are quite variable. So our "humanity," our "essential nature," is filled with contradictions and tensions. We observe and experience—and sometimes foment—uniformity and diversity, in-group and out-group boundaries, tribalism and nationalism (sometimes under the codeword "Exceptionalism"), all of which contribute to a suspicion of those "others" who are not like us.

We humans are unmistakably thinking and believing creatures who sometimes choose not to think for ourselves. Truth to tell, the world outside ourselves is way too big, too complex and formidable for any one of us to know it fully and truly. Instead, we have impressions of the environment and the way it works. This world-in-our-heads is but a miniature representation of

*continued on page 2*

what we know and believe, and what we think and believe. It is what the great American writer, journalist and commentator Walter Lippmann once called a “pseudo-environment,” a “medium of fictions,” and an “interior representation of the world” that serves as a “determining element in thought, feeling, and action” (*Public Opinion* [1922], 10-17).

This inner picture of the world is not necessarily “false,” but it truncates and distorts a more complicated social and physical reality outside ourselves. Lippman says that we tend to see what we want to see: “For the most part we do not first see, and then define, we define first and then see. In the great blooming, buzzing confusions of the outer world we pick out what our culture has already defined for us, and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture” (54-55).

According to Philip Converse in his book *The American Voter* (1980), most people in the U.S. are not knowledgeable or informed about the issues we face as a nation. The vast majority of people do not have a clear and comprehensive set of beliefs, attitudes, and values that inform their socioeconomic and political understanding. Rather they have an undisciplined, unreflective, and largely random collection of views and opinions that they piece together as occasion requires. Then when you add to this deficiency the fact that “information” in our context is frequently fabricated and distorted by partisan ideologues and the media, it is not unreasonable to conclude that most of the public dwells in this “pseudo-environment,” having been told what to think, or to form an opinion on an issue out of information that is incomplete, misleading, exaggerated, concocted, or just plain false.

In our current political season, we are facing issues—local, regional, national and global—that impinge on the essence of human beings and our capacity to thrive and flourish. From local poverty and violence, through a severely mismanaged state fiscal and political system, to the global migrations of peoples for reasons of economy and security, we are challenging the ability of our cultures and our governments to secure basic human rights. If we, as a nation, have such difficulty knowing ourselves and how our world is put together, what chance is there that we can achieve knowledgeability of other nations and groups?

A sustained commitment to living a compassionate life and seeking the well-being of others, especially those who are suffering unjustly, disproportionately, and inequitably, will compel us to dive deep into ourselves to discern our own prejudices, preconceptions, attitudes and opinions before venturing out with care and deliberation into contexts other than our own. We benefit by pausing and pondering how we construct and maintain our sociocultural and religious realities, for this will aid us in discerning how others do it differently and yet similarly. The world as we know it, including our little corner of it, is neither eternal nor absolute; it has not been determined to be this way by God, but has been developed this way by human beings living in particular social, cultural and religious worlds that are changeable.

Equipping ourselves to undertake the work of compassion and loving our neighbor and the alien among us at a higher level of intention and effectiveness—personally *and* communally—will entail our recognizing and contesting our assumptions; we need to ask *why* things are as they appear and exactly what is the *common sense* to which so many seem to subscribe. We need to recognize and contest those influences in our context that shape our thinking, our beliefs, attitudes and values, and commit ourselves to being subversives on behalf of the reign of God and the just and peaceable kingdom. We also need to be extraordinarily imaginative and creative in our exploration of the alternatives to the customary ways of thinking and living that go unchallenged because they are assumed to be “the way, the truth, and the life.” Our faith tradition says Jesus is that, and would do well to watch out for pretenders.

\*\*\*\*\*



Please join us for  
a farewell luncheon  
in honor of  
Rev. Douglas & Linda Sharp  
on Sunday, May 15 at 11:30 a.m.

All are welcome.

## **Gilead Ministry: Appreciating our Partners in Ministry**

**Rev. Erma Croom, Director of the Gilead Ministry**

*For we are laborers together with God.  
I Corinthians 3:9*

The beginning of May marks the end of our seminary students' internships with Gilead Ministry at Jackson Park Hospital. As their internships come to an end, the interns are evaluated and events are planned to celebrate the collaboration with participating seminaries in ministry and the opportunities Gilead Ministry provides their students. This year Gilead Ministry provided internship opportunities for seminary students from McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago Theological Seminary and University of Chicago Divinity School. Irma Spencer is a second year student from McCormick Theological Seminary and Cristian Bitter is a second year student from Chicago Theological Seminary. Irma and Cristian began their internships in September. In addition, Gilead Ministry had six seminary students, Colton Lott, Bob Feeny, Sara Lytle, Sarah Lusche, Nadan Cho and Viraj Patel from the University of Chicago Divinity School who began their internship ministry rotations in November and will conclude their time with us at the end of May.

The opportunity to work with the students from our partnering seminaries in ministry is, without question, one of the most rewarding and enriching aspects of what I do as the Director of Gilead Ministry. Our interns, while in a process of discernment and exploration of their sense of call to pastoral ministry, commit their time and talent in an effort to provide spiritual care to the patients, family members, and staff of Jackson Park Hospital. Some of them also plan, implement and/or coordinate various projects in support of Gilead Ministry. Gilead Ministry appreciates the contributions of our interns and the continual collaboration with our partnering seminaries. We could not adequately carry out our ministry without the valuable contributions they make to the Gilead Ministry at Jackson Park Hospital.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Just a Brief Note** 🎵

**Jade Maze, Music Director**

Our next Sacred Jazz Service will take place on Sunday, May 8<sup>th</sup> featuring the Charles Heath Quartet! Mr. Heath has been here with many of our other artists' ensembles. It will be wonderful to hear a group under his leadership.

Originating from Chicago, IL, Charles "Rick" Heath IV is a versatile and renowned musician from local to international levels. Playing anything from Jazz and Blues to Gospel and Latin music, his signature sound is prominent in the recording studios, concert settings, live Broadway theater platforms, and currently as the drummer for pianist and jazz legend Ramsey Lewis. Some of his proudest accolades include works with Donald Byrd, McCoy Tyner, and Slide Hampton. He also served as the resident drummer with the national tour of Oprah Winfrey and Quincy Jones' theater production of "The Color Purple." He is often rotating hats of composer, band leader, recording artist, musical director,

producer and teacher and simply inspires and outreaches to his surrounding communities at all times.



*Charles Heath, drums, JoAnn Daugherty, piano, Greg Ward sax, Christian Dillingham, bass*

**P.S.** The UCC has asked for our Youth Jam house band, The John Wesley Quartet, to perform at the Chicago Metropolitan Association of the Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ Spring Meeting on Saturday, May 7, 2016, 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at St. Peter's UCC, 125 West Church, Elmhurst, Illinois 60126. Joining them will be 14-year-old singer extraordinaire, Mae Ya Ryan. May the music be a blessing!

**P.S.S.** Last but not least, we in the music department want to send Pastor Douglas and his wife Linda off into the new chapter of their life with our blessing. It has been a pleasure to support his sermons through our music making, and a joy to discuss/share music with someone who has touched many instruments and has a true passion for music. All our music team at sometime or other has shared how appreciated their musical efforts have been by the pastor, and what an asset he has been to the church. So, go with our blessing! It has truly been a joy!

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Vote for Friends of the Gamelan, our Fireplace Room tenants!**



They sent their story about the first Javanese gamelan in the Western Hemisphere - on Hyde Park's Midway - to the Lyric Opera's ChicagoVoices initiative. They are one of eight semi-finalists and need your vote to become one of the three winners. Winners will have an opportunity to turn their story into a work of music theater using the support and artistic resources of the Lyric Opera.

**Go to <https://chicagovoices.lyricopera.org/vote> to cast your vote. You can vote once every 24 hours until May 1!**

\*\*\*\*\*

## Layettes for JPH



The Gilead Auxiliary will be celebrating **Mother's Day on May 8th** by putting together baby layettes for new Mothers at Jackson Park Hospital. We would appreciate any items (new or used - 3 to 6 mo) for the layettes. We can use onesies, sleepers, receiving blankets, bibs, socks, blankets, & diapers.

We appreciate anything you can give.

Experience the Sacred  
through Song and Silence in the Spirit of

# Taizé

Friday, May 6, 7 pm

Hyde Park Union Church 5600 S Woodlawn | hpuc.org   
Join us every first Friday of the month for Taizé

Hyde Park Union Church  
5600 S. Woodlawn Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60637