

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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December 2016

December Church Calendar

Regular Weekly Events:

Wednesdays - Bible Study in the parlor, 1:00 p.m. except 12/28

Thursdays - Senior Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m. except 12/29

Friday, December 2

Taizé Worship, 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 4

Worship with Communion, Rev. Ashley Whitaker preaching, 10:00 a.m.

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

Second Hour, 11:30 a.m.

Jeff Challberg's Ordination, 3:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 11

Worship with Children's Advent Pageant, 10:00 a.m.

Chili-making, 11:30 a.m.

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

Sunday, December 18

Worship, 10:00 a.m.

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

Board Meeting, 12:00 p.m.

Christmas Caroling at JPH, 4:00 p.m.

Meet at HPUC at 3:20 p.m. to carpool to JPH at 3:30 p.m.

Saturday, December 24

Christmas Eve

Worship, 7:00 p.m.

Bring cookies for JPH.

Sunday, December 25

Worship, 10:00 a.m.

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

Monday, December 26

Church Office Closed in Observance of Christmas

Tuesday, December 27

Church Office Closed in Observance of Christmas

Wednesday, December 28

No Bible Study

Thursday, December 29

No Senior Choir Rehearsal

**From the Senior Minister
Rev. Ashley Whitaker**

This Advent, Let's Go to Bethlehem...

In Search of Our Kneeling Places
Ann Weems

In each heart lies a Bethlehem,
an inn where we must ultimately answer
whether there is room or not.
When we are Bethlehem-bound
we experience our own advent in his.
When we are Bethlehem-bound
we can no longer look the other way
conveniently not seeing stars
not hearing angel voices.
We can no longer excuse ourselves
by busily tending our sheep or our kingdoms.

This Advent let's go to Bethlehem
and see this thing that the Lord has made known to us.
In the midst of shopping sprees
let's ponder in our hearts the Gift of Gifts.
Through the tinsel
let's look for the gold of the Christmas Star.
In the excitement and confusion, in the merry chaos,
let's listen for the brush of angels' wings.
This Advent, let's go to Bethlehem
and find our kneeling places.

We all have our favorite traditions as the Thanksgiving holiday comes to an end and as we move towards Christmas Day. Maybe those traditions include spending time with family, making certain recipes to enjoy, or putting up our favorite decorations. I'm already looking forward to making my mother's "secret recipe" fudge and having my family visit us in our new Chicago home for Christmas.

We all know how the Christmas story begins, just as we know how our families and communities begin building a spirit of excitement for Christmas Day. The Christmas story, mainly from the Gospel of Luke, is an account we're likely familiar with – we might even be able to recite it along with Linus while watching *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. But it's important to remember that our culture has Advent and Christmas a little bit...backwards.

The next four weeks of December, leading up to Christmas Eve, are known as Advent in the liturgical calendar; the Christmas season of the church actually begins after Christmas Day. If we look outside of the church during this season, it can be easy to confuse Advent with "Christmas," "shopping," or "festivities." Advent is a season of preparing for Christmas, for the coming of the Christ-child, and for the celebration of God's incarnation on earth with us in the human form of Jesus Christ. The word "Advent" comes

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from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning “coming” or “visit.” In this season, we wait for the advent of the Christ-child on earth. Advent not only looks back in time to Christ’s birth, but also looks forward to the second coming of Christ. It’s only appropriate that Advent begins the liturgical year, which guides us through the seasons of Jesus’ birth, life, death, and resurrection and also guides us as we study Scripture in worship.

Advent is a season of expectation, anticipation, and wonder. Like a child stands before the Christmas tree anxiously waiting for Christmas Day and the presents it may bring, the Christian church gathers in reverent anticipation around the Scriptures and celebrate those that point us toward the coming of the Christ-child. This year’s Advent lectionary texts seem to jump off the page and encourage us to do just that: to look to the words of prophets, psalmists, and apostles to help renew our sense of wonder and joyful expectation at the coming of the Christ-child.

As we journey through this Advent season, may the four bright candles of the Advent wreath light the way for us along this path towards the manger at Bethlehem. How are we preparing room for Jesus in the Bethlehem spaces of our hearts, as Ann Weems suggests we all are called to do? Where have we heard the brush of angels’ wings or seen the glint of the star? May we all go to Bethlehem and kneel this season, for it is there that we will meet the Christ-child, the source of all hope, peace, joy, and love, which we celebrate during this Advent season and in every season of our lives.

Blessings,
Pastor Ashley Whitaker

Gilead Ministry: Holiday Happenings
Rev. Erma Croom, Director of the Gilead Ministry

I appreciate the season of Advent. It arrives with a sense of expectation and anticipation. Its arrival also seems to inspire hope in our hearts and rekindles the belief in and appreciation for the blessedness we all share as members of the human family. And with this Advent season, there is a hint of anticipation in the air at Jackson Park Hospital. A holiday wreath has appeared in the east lobby and pretty soon the whole hospital will be bursting with the colorful, glistening sites and sounds of Christmas.

Hyde Park Union Church and Gilead Ministry will again take part in the holiday festivities at Jackson Park Hospital with our participation in the tree lighting ceremony, our annual Christmas Caroling event, Sunday, December 18th, 4:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. and with the delivery of cookies for hospital staff on Christmas Eve. We are asking those who will be joining us for caroling at Jackson Park Hospital, to meet us at Hyde Park Union Church by 3:20 p.m. in order to carpool to the hospital at 3:30 p.m.

Persons wishing to contribute cookies for hospital staff are asked to **please bring your homemade cookies to the Christmas Eve Service at Hyde Park Union Church, Saturday, December 24.**



Also, Gilead Ministry in conjunction with the Gilead Auxiliary **ask your continued support with donations of coats, scarves, hats and other winter items for patients at Jackson Park Hospital during our winter clothes drive.**



The staff of Gilead Ministry at Jackson Park Hospital would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for your participation and support and wishes all of you Merry Christmas and a Happy and Blessed New Year!



Friday, December 2
7:00 p.m.



Merry Musical Happenings Jade Maze, Music Director

We've been having a wonderful time in the Lord over here in the HPUC music department! Our *To the Bridge!* concert was a grand success and a wonderful collaboration with the UCC *Off the Pews* organization. The multi-generational concert had performers ranging from age 7 to 85. The building pews were full and the audience enthusiastic.



And who knew we were so cutting edge? Robert Irving III is the cover story for the December issue of Chicago Jazz Magazine. And 15-year-old Mae Ya Carter Ryan had a standing room only performance at Buddy Guy's Legends on November 27th as the opener for the Winter Jazz and Blues fest. She hired our jam session host, the John Wesley Experience as her backing group! You can watch her entire performance here: <https://gigity.tv/event/119958>

On the inside track, we wish our alto section leader Hope Littwin all the best. She has been a blessing to us. But we must move forward, and we are doing just that with a long time friend to the church, Amanda Neal. Amanda has been sub singing at the church for the last five years. She has a B.M in vocal performance from Loyola University, New Orleans and an M.M. in vocal performance from Roosevelt University. She will join us through the holiday season and we will see what develops from there. Welcome aboard, Amanda!





Poinsettia Orders

If you would like to order poinsettias in honor or in memory of someone, please call or email the church office with the following information **by 12 p.m. on Thursday, December 15 :**

*your name (s)

*number of poinsettias you're ordering

*your dedication as you would like it to be printed in the bulletin

*your name (s) as you would like them to be printed in the bulletin

*how many poinsettias you're taking home and how many poinsettias you are wanting to be given to a senior member of the church

*payment arrangements

Poinsettias are \$15 each.



December 4: Commitment Sunday and Worship with Communion, 10 a.m.

December 11: Worship with Children's Advent Pageant, 10 a.m.

December 18: Worship, 10 a.m.
Christmas Caroling at JPH, 4 p.m.
(meet at HPUC at 3:20, carpool to JPH at 3:30)

December 24: Christmas Eve Service, 7 p.m.

December 25: Christmas Day Service, 10 a.m.

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