

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



January 2017

January Church Calendar

Regular Weekly Events:

Thursdays - Senior Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m., except 1/5

Sunday, January 1

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

Friday, January 6

Taizé Worship, 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, January 8

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

Chili-making, 11:30 a.m.

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

Second Hour: Epiphany, 11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, January 10

Personnel and Pastoral Relations Committee, 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, January 15

Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday

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

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

Board Meeting, 12:00 p.m.

Monday, January 16

Church Office Closed in Observance of MLK Day

Sunday, January 22

Worship, Rev. Erma Croom preaching, 10:00 a.m.

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

Letter-writing, 11:30 a.m.

Sunday, January 29

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

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

Annual Financial Meeting, 11:30 a.m.

From the Senior Minister
Rev. Ashley Whitaker

In the Beginning...

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. From his fullness we have all received grace upon grace."

John 1:1-5, 14, 16 (NRSV)

As we live into a New Year together as Hyde Park Union Church, may these two poems by Denise Levertov help guide our life of prayer, discipleship, and worship together. The first, *On the Mystery of the Incarnation*, reminds me of the awe inherent to Christmas and the incarnation of God in the person of Jesus Christ. I've known about this poem for a couple years now, and it's a beautiful reminder of how God chose (and continually chooses) to be born (and reborn) in the medium of imperfect human flesh as our guest, brother, and the living Word.

*It's when we face for a moment
the worst our kind can do, and shudder to know
the taint in our own selves, that awe
cracks the mind's shell and enters the heart:
not to a flower, not to a dolphin,
to no innocent form
but to this creature vainly sure
it and no other is god-like, God
(out of compassion for our ugly
failure to evolve) entrusts,
as guest, as brother,
the Word.*

I was recently introduced to another of Levertov's poems, *The Avowal*, through a Christian Century article by L. Roger Owens. In it, Owens says that this poem is the perfect poem for a new year because "its image of life with God can serve as a corrective for those times when a self-help, seize-control mentality slips in."

*As swimmers dare
to lie face to the sky
and water bears them,
as hawks rest upon air
and air sustains them,
so would I learn to attain
freefall, and float
into Creator Spirit's deep embrace,
knowing no effort earns
that all-surrounding grace.*

**PLEASE
NOTE**

Hes will be on vacation Wednesday, January 11 - Monday, January 16. The office will be closed during this time. If you'd like to reach Pastor Ashley on these dates, please email her directly at pastorashley@hpuc.org.

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Owens also points his readers to a quote by Carmelite sister Ruth Burrows, who says, "On our side, prayer is simply being there. ... Prayer is not our activity, our getting in touch with God, our coming to grips with or making ourselves desirable to God. ... We must bear in mind that all we are trying to do is to help ourselves be present for God to love us."

As we move from the Christmas season into the season of Epiphany and into a New Year, rather than allowing ourselves to be tempted by the myth of perfect self-determination promised by infinite numbers of self-help books or despair at the pain and imperfection of our humanity, may we instead seek and find the all-surrounding grace that God entrusts to us in and through the incarnate Christ and in every new day and new year.

Amen.

Blessings,

Pastor Ashley

Gilead Ministry: Engendering Hope in Difficult Times

Rev. Erma Croom, Director of the Gilead Ministry

*But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:
The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
"The Lord is my portion," says my soul,
"therefore I will hope in him."
(Lamentations 3:21-24, NRSV)*

In the passage above, attributed to Jeremiah, the prophet's announcement of hope is interestingly situated in the midst of his expressions of grief and loss. These were difficult times for Jeremiah. His words echo sentiments of hope in the midst of a period of uncertainty and despair for the people of Israel. As a chaplain at Jackson Park Hospital, I attend to those who are experiencing grief and mourning. This attention is an ongoing aspect of our ministry to patients and families. It is one of the most challenging aspects of what it means to be a chaplain. A part of our training as chaplains involves recognizing the signs of grief, providing education about grief, and helping to facilitate and support the grieving process.

Many of us are aware of the five stages of grief, set forth by the pioneer of grief research, Elizabeth Kubler-Ross. The five stages of grief, according to Kubler-Ross, are denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. In addition to her contribution to our understanding of grief, J. William Worden offers another point of view. Rather than understanding the grieving process in terms of stages, he introduced four tasks of mourning. The idea of tasks suggests no particular order in occurrence.¹ Worden's tasks of mourning include: "Accepting the reality of the loss, feeling the pain and expressing grief, adjusting to the world without the deceased and finding an enduring connection with the deceased in the midst of embarking on a new life."²

Kubler-Ross and Worden's contributions provide a means of helping those who grieve to find a way of understanding their experience and thus enabling them to better cope with their grief.

As human beings we encounter various life experiences that may contribute to feelings of loss and grief. The role of the chaplain is to help those who have experienced loss to grieve and provide a safe space where they can receive the comfort and support they need. Allowing ourselves to give expression to our grief can open us up to a greater appreciation for the gift of life and the people who are in our lives. It can also enable us to find hope, like the prophet Jeremiah, and the willingness to embrace the new beginnings that are inherent in all endings. As we enter this New Year there seems to be considerable uncertainty about the future. In these times of uncertainty, some of us, for various reasons, may be experiencing feelings of loss, grief, even despair. Jeremiah's words remind us that there is no shortage of God's mercy and love. In every circumstance God remains faithful. In this New Year, with all of its uncertainties, let us go forward, embracing 2017 with the certainty of a renewed hope and faith.

¹ Kanel, Kristi, *A Guide to Crisis Intervention*, Fifth Edition, (Stamford, Connecticut: Cengage Learning, 2015), 136.

² J. William Worden, *Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy: A Handbook for the Mental Health Practitioner*, 4th Edition, (New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2009) 39-52.

We are Blessed... **Jade Maze, Music Director**

I wanted to express a word of gratitude in the newsletter for our wonderful organist, Mr. Elikem Fiase. This month marks his one-year anniversary at Hyde Park Union Church. Elikem has been such a wonderful addition and has so many talents that we are just beginning to touch on. Aside from his obvious musical attributes, Elikem is a true embodiment of God's grace, light, patience, and love. I wanted to remind everyone in the building how blessed we are at Hyde Park Union Church! Don't hesitate to share a word of thanks next time you hear/see him.



And back by popular demand:



Ordination Service for Jeffrey Challberg Ray Gadke

A very special event in the life of Hyde Park Union Church took place on Sunday afternoon, December 4, 2016, when our congregation was privileged to host the ordination of Jeffrey Challberg to the Christian Ministry in the American Baptist Churches U.S.A. Jeff Challberg served as a student intern at Hyde Park Union Church during his time at the University of Chicago Divinity School and also worked as a chaplain at Jackson Park Hospital with the Rev. Erma Croom. In the best Baptist/Free Church tradition, where ordination to the ministry is celebrated by the local sponsoring congregation, the beautiful ordination service was very much a HPUC "family affair." Participants included Jeff's Watch-Care Committee members: Richard Barnard, a member of the HPUC Church Board; the Rev. Erma Croom, Director of the Gilead Ministry; the Rev. Wesley Sun, a HPUC Lily Resident, former Jackson Park Hospital chaplain and member of HPUC; and Christine Bailey, HPUC's Church Moderator. The service was prepared by Jeff and Hyde Park Union Church's Senior Minister, the Rev. Ashley Whitaker. The Rev. Carol McVetty, Interim Executive Minister, represented the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago in the service.

The sermon for Jeff's ordination service was delivered by the Rev. David Gregg, a seminary classmate of Jeff's, who currently serves as the Interim Minister of Chicago's North Shore Baptist Church and recently served as Interim Minister of our neighboring congregation, the United Church of Hyde Park. The service was also graced by the music ministry of Joseph Bierzynski, from the Hyde Park Union Church choir. The service, which included hymns, prayers, the reading of Holy Scripture, a sermon on the work of the Christian ministry, the "charge" to the new ordinand, and the ordination by the Laying on of Hands, was followed by a festive reception held in the church Social Hall.

Beginning on January 3, 2017, Jeff Challberg will begin a new ministry as a site director with the Ebenezer

Health Care services of Minnesota, which provides physical and spiritual care for senior citizens in the Twin Cities area.



It is a special blessing when a local congregation "gives back" to the larger Church a minister through ordination. Hyde Park Union Church has been indeed blessed to have hosted the ordinations of Wesley Sun, Kevin Boyd, and Joel Harter to the Christian Ministry in the past several years. We have also been fortunate to have been blessed by the ministry of Amanda Guthrie who was recently ordained into the Christian Ministry of the United Church of Christ at Chicago's Saint Paul's UCC Church on Fullerton Avenue. Hyde Park Union Church is currently supporting our member Wei Jen Chen, a student at Chicago Theological Seminary, as he prepares for ordination in the UCC. We are indeed fortunate to have been given the opportunity of supporting these young men and women as they pursue the call to the Christian Ministry. Let us continue to keep these special sons and daughters of Hyde Park Union Church in our prayers.



Thank you to all the parents and volunteers who helped out with the Children's Christmas Pageant, and thank you to the children for their ministry!



Experience the Sacred
through Song and Silence in the Spirit of

Taizé

Friday, January 6th, 7pm
Celebrate the beginning...



**Hyde Park
Union Church**

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



January 5 - January 10
Monday - Friday: 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

January 11 - January 16
Office Closed

January 17 - January 20
Tuesday & Wednesday: 12:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Thursday: 3:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Friday: by appointment only

January 23 - March 10
Monday: 12:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Tuesday: 7:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Wednesday: 12:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Thursday: by appointment only
Friday: 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Closed Weekends

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