

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

June 2017



June Church Calendar

Regular Weekly Events:

Wednesdays - Bible Study in the Senior Minister's Office, **10:00 a.m.**, except 6/7

Thursday, June 1

Senior Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, June 2

Taizé Worship, 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, June 3

Youth & All Family Canoe Trip, 9:30 a.m.

Pentecost Sunday, June 4

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

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

Annual Congregational Meeting, 11:30 a.m.

Wednesday, June 7

NO Bible Study

Thursday, June 8

Senior Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, June 10

Bake Sale Benefiting Heifer International at Kimbark Shopping Center, 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, June 11

Worship, Rev. Liz Jones preaching

Chili-making & Letter-writing, 11:30 a.m.

Children's Program Benefiting Heifer International, 11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, June 13

Missions & Social Concerns Committee Meeting, 4:30 p.m.

Property & Finance Committee Meeting, 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, June 14

Christian Education Committee Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, June 15

Last Senior Choir Rehearsal of the Season, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, June 17

Convocation of Committees (Board Retreat) for New and Old Board Members, 9:00 a.m.

Children and Youth Sunday, June 18

Father's Day
Worship, 10:00 a.m.

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

Special Congregational Financial Meeting, 12:00 p.m.

Friday, June 23

Youth Camping & Meditation Trip, 4:30 p.m.

Sunday, June 25

Worship, Rev. Ashley Whitaker preaching,
Music by Dr. Stephen Alltop, 10:00 a.m.

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

Second Hour: Echoes of Summer Concert, 12:00 p.m.

Wednesday, June 28

July/August Newsletter Submissions Due by 5:00 p.m.

Pastor's Column Rev. Ashley Whitaker

"This is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: 'In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.'" Acts 2:16-18 (a portion of the Pentecost narrative found in Acts 2:1-21)

Every so often, a discussion on social media will get going among any given group of pastors on what the role of the church *is* and also what it *should be*. However, it's not simply *our* job, as seminary graduates, pastors, or public theologians, to answer these questions. It is the job of *the whole church together* to reflect on our role in each generation, era, and unique context. Pentecost, which falls on June 4th this year, provides a unique kind of lens and framework in which to consider these kinds of questions.

So I pose these questions to you, my sisters and brothers in Jesus Christ and co-workers in building the Kingdom of God. What do you think? What makes us, as the church, unique and necessary? Let me know your answers, and I'll share some of my thoughts in the July newsletter!

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Serious Question: What do you think the church is supposed to *do*?

Plenty of non-profits exist that serve the marginalized and oppressed in the world. Websites like MeetUp and other community activities can help you find groups of people to "fellowship" with. Especially in a large and diverse city like Chicago, professional and amateur musicians are ubiquitously available to listen to and it's relatively easy to experience beautiful art or scenery that makes you feel contemplative and introspective.

The Internet is chock full of TED Talk style teachings that can challenge and inform you. You can find places to teach you meditation and mindfulness techniques, like yoga, tai chi, and more. You don't need to go to church to experience any of that.

So, what is the church's *distinct* calling? What about the church is specific and *necessary* to the world?<sup>1</sup>

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One colleague said, "The Church is called to be the Body of Christ in the world. In the words of St. Teresa of Avila, 'Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours.'"

Grace Pritchard Burson (Episcopal priest and daughter of *The Sunday Paper* children's worship coloring page author Gretchen Pritchard), said, "My mom said it best: The church is called to gather around the story of God and God's people, hear it, connect with it, and let it change them."

Another colleague shared a quote from *Searching for Sunday* author Rachel Held Evans: "The purpose of the church, and of the sacraments, is to give the world a glimpse of the kingdom, to point in its direction. When we put a kingdom-spin on ordinary things - water, wine, leadership, marriage, friendship,

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feasting, sickness, forgiveness - we see that they can be holy, they can point us to something greater than ourselves, a fantastic mystery that brings meaning to everything."

How would you answer these questions? *What is the distinct calling of the church in general? What is the distinct calling of Hyde Park Union Church in particular?*

Blessings,
Pastor Ashley

¹ Many thanks to Rev. Elizabeth Grasham, Pastor, Heights Christian Church, Houston, TX, for asking these kinds of challenging, relevant, and meaningful questions.

Summertime & A Culture of Violence¹ **Rev. Erma Croom, Director of the Gilead Ministry**

Thus says, the Lord of hosts:

Consider, and call for the mourning women to come;
send for the skilled women to come;
let them quickly raise a dirge over us,
so that our eyes may run down with tears,
and our eyelids flow with water.

Death has come up into our windows,
It has entered our palaces,
To cut off the children from the streets
and the young men from the squares.

Thus says the Lord: Do not let the wise boast in their wisdom,
Do not let the mighty boast in their might,
Do not let the wealthy boast in their wealth;
But let those who boast, boast in this,
That they understand and know me,
That I am the Lord;
I act with steadfast love, justice and righteousness in the earth,
For in these things I delight, says the Lord.
Jeremiah 9: 17, 21, 23 and 24 (NRSV)

Summer time brings bright sunshine, lush green vegetation, plenty of outdoor fun, barbecues, biking, hiking and vacations. Summer time in Chicago, with its warm, seasonable days and evenings also brings with it the likelihood that a child, a young adult, a man or woman will die because of gun violence.

It is saddening to realize that our communities seem to be swept up in a culture of violence. The reality of living in a culture of violence becomes more evident as we consider the senseless shootings taking place on our city streets. What we are coming to realize is that violence produces violence. And in many instances what we are seeing in our streets is the reaction to various types of violence, such as the violence of economic injustice and racial discrimination. Other underlying problems influencing community violence include the brokenness and disruption of families, the inability to resolve conflicts, low self-esteem, mental illness, drug abuse and addiction. Our bulging prisons and the closure of community mental health programs indicate that we live in a society that would prefer to treat symptoms rather than identify and address the root of the problem.

My own experience of grief and loss of a family member who died as a result of gun violence informs my response to those I encounter in the throes of grief during my ministry as a chaplain. In February of 2008 my 18-year old nephew was shot and killed in Tampa, FL. At the time I was a seminary student in Ohio. After hearing the news I drove to Florida to support and comfort my brother, his wife and their older son. My own experience of grief as a result of losing my nephew to gun violence enables me to empathize with and be present to those who mourn because of their loss of a loved one to gun violence. However in spite of our current realities of violence we also have a witness from God's word of hope in the midst of our pain.

In the text from the book of Jeremiah a call is made for "the mourning women to come . . . for the skilled women to come" to help the people give expression to their grief. However it is not the prophet who initiates this communal grieving process, it is God. God, the prophet and the people are bound together in this expression of grief. This grieving process engages the entire community. All who are being impacted by the violence and destruction are called to participate. In a society where their voices are seldom heard, women are called upon to take the lead. What was about to occur would have a powerful effect on individual, families, and communities that were suffering from the impact of violence and destruction.

The mourning women gave public witness to the pain and grief of the community. They demonstrated that grief is an appropriate response to loss. Public mourning can also represent a critique of oppressive systems and structures that contribute to the hopelessness and despair that lead to senseless violence.² The acknowledgment of the pain caused by violence is recognition that something has gone wrong. The natural inclination is to deny the pain, to suppress or to numb our pain. Our tendency is to ignore it because when we ignore our pain we don't have to deal with the possibility that things are not as they should be. All too often we become desensitized to violence. Violence pervades what we see on television, video games and the music we listen to. Nothing shocks us anymore. The shooting of a young man in the streets is not supposed to happen. Young boys and young girls are supposed to grow up and complete public school, go to college if they chose, become productive citizens and make a positive contribution to society. It should not be the norm that our youth are dying in our city streets.

The hope for all of us who mourn because of gun violence is found in verse 24 of Jeremiah's message, "I am God who exercises lovingkindness." It is the hope of a loving God who accompanies us in the pain of loss and grief. The witness of the mourning women conveys the message that there is need for collective expressions of grief at the loss of those who are killed as a result of gun violence. There is a need for community recognition and acknowledgment of the significant loss we sustain at the loss of even one life. There is also a need for communities to embrace God's love and to comfort, support, and encourage each other in the process of healing broken lives and relationships.

¹ Submitted for reprinting with revisions.

² Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 2nd Edition, (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2001), 57.



Invitation to Make a Difference

OPEN POSITIONS

President: Schedules and runs all meetings of the Board. Assures that all functions of the group are being performed. Serves as primary contact point for general public communication.

Treasurer: Provides financial accountability for the group. Receives and disseminates mail, processing incoming checks. Writes checks and maintains bank accounts, including Certificates of Deposit. Reports monthly to the Board, maintains donation records, and sends thank you letters/end of year tax letters to donors.

Affordable Housing Policy Specialist: Stays up-to-date with local, state and national legislation and regulations affecting affordable housing, including sites that are at risk of losing affordable housing status. Disseminates relevant information and engages Board and members in activism designed to create and retain affordable housing in the Hyde Park, Kenwood and Woodlawn communities. Helps maintain contact with allied organizations by attending relevant meetings, workshops, and conferences and sharing results with the Board for information and/or action. Maintain current listing of organizations to which inquiries may be referred to assistance.

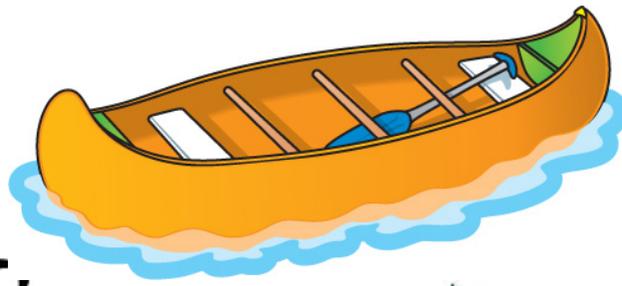
HPTHP Making the journey out of homelessness takes more than a quick hand-out. It takes determination, resources, and the support of a community of friends, neighbors and mentors.

Founded in 2002, the Hyde Park Transitional Housing Project (HPTHP) provides housing and a stable, supportive environment for up to two years for homeless families in Chicago's Hyde Park and Kenwood neighborhoods who are working on improving or developing the skills necessary to live independently.

The strength of HPTHP is in the positive relationship which develops between mentors and the families they are supporting. We are an all-volunteer organization, supported by local churches and synagogues, individuals, businesses, and the Hyde Park and Kenwood Interfaith Council.

Questions? HPTHP@yahoo.com or Valerie Lilley 309-360-6095

Save THE Water



Youth and All Family Canoe Trip

Join us at the Ned Brown / Busse Woods Forest Preserve for a day of canoeing and picnicking on **Saturday, June 3rd**.

Youth Camping and Meditation Trip

Join us for a youth camping trip to Mississippi Palisades State Park. We leave Hyde Park Union Church at 4:00 PM on **Friday, 23 June** to return on Sunday at 10 AM, just in time for church.

Please contact Tim Smith at tsmith@wiglafpricing.com to RSVP.

UPCOMING CHURCH EVENTS

SUNDAY, JUNE 4 | AFTER WORSHIP | ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL PROGRAM MEETING

**SATURDAY, JUNE 17 | 9 AM-12 PM | CONVOCATION OF COMMITTEES (BOARD RETREAT)
FOR CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS & NEWLY-ELECTED CHURCH LEADERSHIP**

SUNDAY, JUNE 18 | AFTER WORSHIP | SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL FINANCIAL MEETING



A special thanks to **all of the volunteers and those who donated baby items for Gilead Ministry's Mother's Day Layette Assembly.** Thanks to all of you, we were able to assemble 25 layettes for new mothers at Jackson Park Hospital. Your contributions are greatly appreciated.



India Daniels graduated from Calvin College on May 20, 2017, with a BA in history and literature. She has accepted an AmeriCorps VISTA assignment with Turning the Page Chicago.

Youth is Not Wasted on the Young Jade Maze, Music Director

It's nice to see young people stirring and moving in our midst. I wanted to thank Snow Adams for stopping through and singing with us for a couple of Sundays on her break from college. She'll be joining us more regularly for the month of July and it will be great to hear and see her on a regular basis.

I met a young woman on the last Sunday of May that was looking for voice lessons. After running her through a few scales and songs, I offered her the opportunity to be a vocal intern here at HPUC and she accepted. Julia Radamacher-Wedd is a high school sophomore with a lovely soprano voice. She lives right across the street and will start her duties on Father's Day, Sunday, June 18th. Can't wait!

The last guest artist we had for our Sacred Jazz Service is being honored! Young vibraphonist Thaddeus Tukes is being recognized by the Vivian G. Harsh Society with the Marjorie S. Joyner Emerging Artist Award for his work as a musician, producer and journalist. The awards ceremony takes place on June 17th from 4-7pm at the Kroc Center Banquet Hall, 1250 W. 119th Street. Go to <http://harshsociety.org/> for more information. Congratulations, Thaddeus!

Last but not least, Ravinia is presenting another Opera for the Young production. This year it will be Donizetti's *Elixir of Love*. Several of our HPUC kids have joined in the chorus in past performances. If you have kids between 6-12 years of age and think they may want to join in the performance, please contact me (jade@hpuc.org). I get the chorus for the production together every year. It's always a lot of fun and very educational, and costumes are involved! Go to <https://www.ravinia.org/ShowDetails/index?id=1331> for more info. Keep on moving and shaking, young people. We need your energy!



A COOKIE FOR A GLASS OF MILK!

The children of Hyde Park Union Church
are raising money for
HEIFER INTERNATIONAL

Where: KIMBARK PLAZA SHOPPING Center

When: June 10, 2017, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Then come and join us during Second Hour on Sunday, June 11 for a presentation led by the children, also benefiting Heifer International!



Saturday, June 10, 2017 | 8:00 p.m. | Hyde Park Union Church

For its final program of the season, Chicago Chorale presents the major works of two exceptionally influential composers: **Missa Papae Marcelli**, by G.P. da Palestrina, and **The Peaceable Kingdom**, by Randall Thompson. Separated by 300 years, both composers established styles that are traceable through the many composers who followed them. These works are seldom held in live performance and rarely, if ever, heard together. This concert spotlights the exquisite blend and expressivity of the choir, virtues that led the Chicago Tribune's John von Rhein to name Chorale's tribute to Arvo Pärt the "Finest Choral Performance of 2015."

Please join us in experiencing the majesty and drama of these two outstanding works.

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