



Uniting!

Winter 2019

News you can use from the United Church of Hyde Park

Coming Events

Tuesday, December 24, 7:00pm
Christmas Eve program

Thursday, January 9, 2020, 7:00pm
Town Hall Meeting with community groups and UCHP members

Every Sunday 9:30am – 1:00pm
Adult Bible Study
Contemporary Issues
Worship and Fellowship

Every 1st Sunday
Worship, Communion and Pot Luck

Every 2nd and last Saturday of the month, 9am – 10am
Open Breakfast – Ray Hall

Every 3rd Tuesday of the month
Southside Caregiver Support Group
10am – 11:30am, Hauschildt Room



Rev. Charlene Hill

An Advent Message

If it was that easy everybody would be doing it.
Anonymous Saying

United Church of Hyde Park resides in a very hot location. Our church is located in an ideal spot. If I somehow did not notice this, I have been reminded over and over again by several individuals. Other ministers, when they learn where I am located, speak with envy that if their church were in this location they would take advantage; ministry would look very different. They imply that just by the location that their church would be growing and thriving. Even as recently as our own church meeting members expressed this sentiment that we sit in a wonderful location. It has plagued me too, this notion that we should be doing much better than we are because of where we are located.

An Advent Message continued from page 1

At our last Think Group Meeting (where Paul, Deborah, Stephanie, Nevin, and I meet every two weeks to discuss the possibilities for UCHP), I repeated this notion that we are sitting on a hot spot when Nevin responded, "if it was easy everybody would be doing it." I am use to phrases that bling and say nothing of depth but this statement resonated with me. There are enough churches in ideal and not so ideal locations that are declining. We are seeing astronomical decline in all mainline Protestant churches. And there are a host of reasons as to why decline is happening suggesting that being a vital and relevant church is not so easy. I am not looking for excuses but I also do not want to deny the truth of what is happening in the history of the church.

However, though there are a lot less, there are churches that are thriving. As I begin my fourth year at UCHP, I believe we could be one of those churches. In this season of advent, I have **hope** that we will be guided by God and that we will find our way. I have a **peace** that the path we are on is rooted in the values of love, grace, and justice for each other and humankind. I experience a **joy** in the ministries at our church and our gathering together on Sunday morning. And I love this congregation and the way we try to care for and love each other. I rest in an agitated peace that we are going to be okay. This has been a good year and I look forward to next year. I hope for each member as well as our faith community that we stir the pot of **hope, peace, joy, and love**.

May God's Love Infuse your Holidays~



What is TPIRC? - FAQ

by Rev. Charlene Hill

How many times does someone have to hear something to remember it? The average is 7 times. So maybe you've heard this acronym, TPIRC, and maybe you haven't but you probably haven't heard it seven times.

What does the acronym TPIRC stand for?
Thriving Pastors in Revitalizing Congregations.

What is TPIRC? TPIRC is an initiative of the United Church of Christ Illinois Conference. They applied for a Lily grant to help support churches that were experiencing one or more of the following:

1. church decline;
2. aging population; or
3. diminishing financial resources.

What resources does TPIRC provide to our church?

1. There is a yearly 2 day summit where 3-5 members from each church go away with the other participating churches to hear top experts in the field of church revitalization.
2. In addition each church is assigned a cohort group where they get together with 5-6 other churches to network and resource share.

What else? Pastors are supposed to receive a clergy coach and gather together once in clergy support and learning groups (TBD).

How long will this initiative last? 5 years

What is expected of United?

1. We provide 3-5 members from our congregation (Geraldine, Wei Jen, Suneeta, Inagrace, and Paul are your delegates). Similar grant recipients often provide support to the pastor alone but this initiative recognizes that

revitalizing congregations must include both clergy and church members.

2. We pay \$500 annually to show our commitment to this program.

What to expect? This initiative just started in September 2019. We have attended two meetings with the next one scheduled in March 2020. In 2020 the United Church of Hyde Park participants will be extending an invitation to the congregation to engage in some of the conversations the participants have been having. Stay tuned and read your bulletin. We hope our participation will be another conversational partner as we continue to try and be relevant in our community.

What can we do now? Reach out to the delegates (Geraldine, Wei Jen, Suneeta, Inagrace, and Paul are your delegates) and share with them your thoughts about TPIRC and revitalizing ideas.

Meet Gerri Idom

by Deborah Major



If you have come back to Sunday worship service after missing a few weeks you might be wondering who that is up front leading our Joys and Concerns. We are pleased to welcome Geraldine Idom, who prefers to be called Gerri. Gerri is currently pursuing a Master of Divinity at Chicago Theological Seminary. CTS requires every candidate to complete an internship, so Gerri is fulfilling that part of her studies by serving as pastoral intern for us, supervised by Reverend Charlene.

Gerri had been looking for a UCC church to serve for her internship and she asked to work with us because of our diversity and perfect

south side location. Gerri has wide ranging internship learning goals, including techniques of preaching and presenting, increasing biblical knowledge, church administration and plant operations. She expects to graduate in May 2022 and after graduation she plans to start her own church ministry.

Gerri was born and raised in Chicago and has lived on the south side of the city for most of her life. If she were not worshiping with us every Sunday, she would be attending Trinity United Church of Christ on 95th street where she has been a member for the past 3 years.

Gerri comes from a large close knit family, with three siblings on her mother's side and ten siblings on her father's side. She has two sons and nine grandchildren ranging in age from 3 years to 20 years. Gerri loves her family and they love her, something that was in evidence the Sunday that her eldest grandson attended our worship service with her. We hope that if you haven't had the opportunity to meet her yet that you will have a chance to do that soon since her internship with us will end in May of 2020.

Advent: The Hope of the World

by Inagrace Dietterich



The Christian year is a gift of grace—time marked by what God in Christ has been up to, is up to, and will be up to, for the sake of God's beloved world. With Advent Christians begin the cycle of seasons that pull them ever deeper into God's call of whole and abundant life for all. Advent (from the Latin word *adventus*, which means "arrival" or "coming") is the first season of the church's liturgical or worship year. As a period for devout and joyful expectation, it focuses on preparation

for the coming of Christ. The story of Jesus Christ in Advent is the story of hope coming into the world.

During Advent, the sanctuary is clothed in blue (banners, hangings, altar coverings), designating the solemn nature of Christian hope. At United Church we mark the four Sundays of Advent with an Advent Wreath, a garland of evergreens with four candles. Although the main symbolism of the wreath is the progression of time, we also attach themes to each candle: hope, faith, joy, and love.

“Watchful expectancy is the mood of Advent—a time when the deepening winter darkness turns, almost imperceptibly, toward the slowly deepening light that nourishes the new life of spring. It is a time when, today, the Christian community longs for the reign of God to overcome the weariness, oppression, and sin that surround and suffuse its life. Advent is a time in the Christian year when the community watches, still expectantly, for the light of the star, the sign of new birth, and the new experience of God’s presence and power in human affairs” (Richard D.N. Dickinson).

UCHP Choir

by Joe Wilkinson, Director of Music-Organist



We are fortunate to have a dedicated, talented choir! The Choir is supported by four section leaders who bring exceptional skills. Below is a little information about each person so you can get know them better. They are all fairly new to UCHP and if you haven't introduced yourself yet, please do, they would like to meet you.

Rachel Jaicks, soprano, is a native of the Chicagoland area and lives in the south suburbs. She is a graduate of the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University with a degree in Voice Performance. Rachel has sung such roles as Geraldine in Barber’s *A Hand of Bridge*, Alice in Wilder’s *Sunday Excursion*, Giunone in *La Calisto*, Helena in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Sesto in *Giulio Cesare*, Gianetta in *The Gondoliers*, Edith in *The Pirates of Penzance*, and Annina in *La Traviata*. She has also done a variety of concert work in Chicagoland with groups such as the South Holland Master Chorale, Lincoln-Way Area Chorale, and the Grande Prairie Singers. She is an active choral singer with the Chicago Chorale. Outside of her singing life, Rachel is an amateur photographer, and fosters animals with PAWS. She lives with her partner, Andrew, and cat, Elle.

Catherine Jaicks, mezzo-soprano from Flossmoor, IL with a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from the College of Wooster where she studied with Dr. Carrie Delapp-Culver. During her time at Wooster, she appeared in roles such as the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Catherine in *Wuthering Heights*, and was the soprano soloist for Schubert’s Mass in G with the Wooster Symphony. For her senior Independent Study, titled *The Virgin, the Temptress, and the Madwoman: Characterizations of Women in Western Art Music*, she used the feminist writings of music theorist Susan McClary to explore the archetypes assigned to female characters. This project was accompanied by a recital featuring the works of Strauss, Barber, Cipullo, Larsen, and others. She is a current choral singer with the Apollo Chorus and the Chicago Chorale, and a private student of Dr. Tanya Ruck Kruse of the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. Catherine is also an

avid reader, loves camping, and trying out new recipes.

Christopher King, tenor is a native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana where he also attended college at Louisiana State University receiving a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance. During the summer of 2019, he moved to Chicago, Illinois to do a year of service as a student success coach with CityYear AmeriCorp. Christopher has been fortunate to have sung at several churches in the Baton Rouge area; Trinity Episcopal, Broadmoor Baptist, and First Presbyterian. During Christopher's free time he enjoys baking, composing music, sketching, attending art galleries, and hiking

Joe Bierzynski, bass is a musician, voice actor, and game developer. Joe graduated last year from Chicago College of Performing Arts with a degree in voice performance. Though he studied classical music, his personal library heavily consists of country, blues, jazz, swing and folk music from the United States, the United Kingdom, and China. His life is more than music alone however, and his car radio is, ironically, most often tuned to NPR. He is more than happy to tell you what fascinating trivia he learned recently about the human brain or the animal kingdom. Or feel free to ask him what it's like to sing in Mandarin, what his favorite recipes are, or which cafes in Chicago have which non-dairy milks. Really, talk to him about anything except how the Cubs are doing.

Church Council News

by Deborah Major



Following the July 2019 Congregational meeting where we discussed our disappointment with the offer made by the University of Chicago, the

Council recommended the formation of an ad hoc committee, a brainstorming group whose purpose would be to generate and explore options that would help support the church financially while allowing us to maintain our ministry as the Church on the Corner.

Recognizing that we are in a time of major transition, much of the work of council has been focused on supporting and staying abreast of the research being done by the brainstorming committee, dubbed the Think Group. A brief summary of this committee's progress follows.

The Think Group

This ad hoc brainstorming team began regular meetings in August and has met approximately every other week since August 17th. Think Group members are Reverend Charlene Hill, Paul Dietterich, Stephanie Uhl, and Deborah Major.

The group established the essential conditions that the use of our church building must meet if we are to see our efforts as successful. It must provide space (1) for worship, (2) to build community and serve the wider community, (3) to foster spiritual development and (4) to witness for justice.

We met with Ward Miller, Executive Director of Preservation Chicago, an organization that seeks to protect and revitalize Chicago's irreplaceable architecture. We interviewed pastors of churches that have built senior housing and we looked at church spaces that have been redeveloped for use as event spaces, gymnasiums, houses and retail stores. We also considered renting spaces inside the church to local businesses and partnering with Partners for Sacred Spaces, an organization that helps churches with feasibility studies and capital campaigns.

After considering a range of options we realized that we needed to enlist the support of Nevin

Hedlund to help us identify what would be feasible, given the current condition of our church building. In mid-October we met with a group of interested community members that we call the Qumbya group. This group is very interested in helping us to preserve the church building and they are hoping to collaborate with us to achieve this goal. They see our building as vital to the integrity of historical Hyde Park and to its future as a community anchor.

The Think Group is currently exploring three optional paths: one is to have UCHP remain as owner of the church building and to rent building space that would generate enough income to help us stay in our current location (ideally \$200,000 annually). A second option is to sell the church building to another developer and negotiate space for us to worship (this was the option we had originally pursued with the University). The third option is to build coalitions with community allies, political supporters, local businesses and preservationists who see the value of having the church remain as a social anchor in Hyde Park.

We are currently pursuing the third option: coalition building. The Qumbya group is very interested in helping us and they have proposed hosting a Town Hall meeting co-sponsored by The Hyde Park Historical society, the Hyde Park Community Conference and other key community organizations. The purpose of the Town Hall meeting would be to explore community needs and the ways that our church can be a resource for meeting those needs. During the Town Hall meeting we hope to hear about ideas for tenants and services that could generate income for our church, while simultaneously serving the business needs of those who would use our space.

The Think Group encourages all church members and interested parties to attend the **Town Hall meeting scheduled for Thursday, January 9, 2020 at 7:00pm in Ray Hall.**

Caregiver Support Group

by Ann Audrain



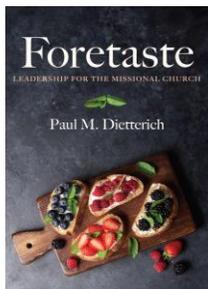
The Support group continues to meet monthly on the third Tuesday of each month, 10:00 to 11:30am. Everyone is welcome, church members and anyone from the community, just come when you can. Our purpose is twofold, to provide support for each other as we navigate the unknown challenges of caregiving, and have program presentations that provides information and sources of help. Past programs have included care management, what is dementia, where to find help and conversation on how to care for yourself.

Our next meeting is December 17 at 10:00 at UCHP. We will have a program by Catholic Charities on understanding help that is available.

While I am one of the organizers of the group, I am also a caregiver. I have found support and insights from others in caregiving situations, as well as useful information and guidance. The combination of expert information and practical advice from others traveling a similar path has been comforting and important to me as I continue on this unfamiliar journey.

Why I wrote “Foretaste”

by Rev. Paul Dietterich



I wrote “Foretaste” to help congregations embrace a new vision of the church centered in God’s mission. Congregations can learn to embody the gospel in their common life and shared ministry. They can learn to provide an advance taste of life inside the reign of God. They can become an *hors d’oeuvres*, or foretaste, of the way of life God desires for the whole human race. They can become a different way to be a society.

We now know that such transformation occurs when dedicated and skilled leaders help to create a climate that expresses this vision. Leaders can take specific actions that, if practiced consistently over time, will enable a congregation to become a foretaste of life inside the reign of God.

- Support: they build-up persons’ sense of self-worth and importance,
- Receptivity: they seek and use people’s ideas,
- Emphasize Performance: they help the congregation identify and pursue clear goals that enable faithful participation in God’s mission.
- Build Missional Leadership Teams: they help the council and other leadership groups develop as high performing working units intent on participating in God’s mission,
- Facilitate Work: they provide people with the resources they need to implement the work of the church,
- Group Decision Making: they help the congregation make decisions in ways that build unity and avoid creating winners and losers.

My hope is that pastors and other leaders will find this book to be a useful resource that enables them to be more faithful and fruitful in their ministry.

OPEN HOUSE CHICAGO

by Stephanie Uhl

On October 19th and 20th United participated in Open House Chicago, which is a free, 2-day public festival that offers behind-the-scenes access to 250+ architecturally, historically and culturally significant sites across Chicago. We had a total of 317 guest come to tour our church, and experience the beauty of our sanctuary and architecture. Thank you to my wonderful team of volunteers, who helped greet visitors and answer questions about the church.

It’s always a blessing to be a part of Open House Chicago and be reminded of the history of our church and the amazing details of our sanctuary. To remember our 16 charter members of the Presbyterian Church represented by the lamps along the north, east, and south sides of the sanctuary. To look up at the dome bearing the names of the apostles. To read the names of the great hymn writers inscribed on the rolls, scroll and seals along the top of the choir loft screen. To see the beauty of the sanctuary as the light shines through our stained glass windows, which inspires some guests to just sit and admire.

Although our church was originally founded as a Presbyterian church in 1860, our current church building was built in 1889, using the materials from our original church building, and the church held its first service in the our current building in 1890. The Presbyterian church merged with Congregational church (UCC) in 1930, and then with the Methodist church in 1970. 2020 will be our 160th year as a church. We have such amazing history, and it’s a blessing to be able to open our doors.

UCHP in the Community



Welcome to the United Church of Hyde Park

Guiding Vision

"We are a diverse, Christ-centered people, learning together and reaching out to serve the community in faith, hope, and love."

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Visit us on Facebook

United-Church-of-Hyde-Park

Pastor: Rev. Charlene Hill

Music Director – Organist: Joe Wilkinson

Office Manager: Stephanie Robinson

Office Hours: Monday - Friday 9am – 1pm

Every Sunday

9:30 am Adult Bible Study – Hauschildt Room

9:30 am Contemporary Issues – Hauschildt Room

10:30 am Worship – Sanctuary

11:30 am Fellowship – Ray Hall

Open Breakfast

Every 2nd and last Saturday of the month

9am – 10am – Ray Hall