



The Park



Celebrating 205 Years!

Spring Edition 2016

**PARK AVENUE
CHRISTIAN
CHURCH**

Affiliated with
The Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
and
The United Church of Christ




FORWARD

A Christian Community that Embraces the Divinity of Difference

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Spring 2016

Holy Week at The Park

Maunder Thursday — Holy Communion and Foot Washing Service:

March 24, 7:00 pm

Good Friday — Service held at Park Avenue Methodist Church on East 86th and Park Avenue:

March 25, 12:30 pm

Easter Sunday — Brass, All Choirs, Baby Baptisms, and Sunday School Activities:

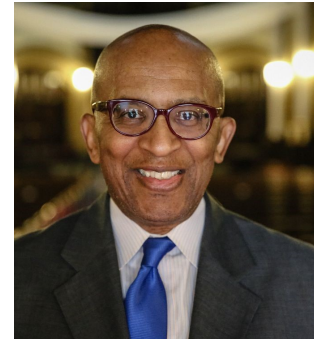
March 27, 11:00 am

Inside this issue:

Easter 2016	2
Events & Opportunities	3-4
News & Notes	4 & 6
Mission Story	5
Retired Hellos	5
Community Saturday Lunch Program Resurrected	6
Children & Youth Ministries at The Park	6
Update: Pastoral Search	7
CPE Graduation	7
Prayer Ministry	7
Elder's Note	7
Birthdays at The Park	8

EASTER 2016

THE SUNDAY of the Resurrection is not only the greatest day of the church year; it is also the only one that is set by the moon. Easter always falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after the spring equinox. As complicated as that sounds, it makes ancient sense, since it means Easter coincides with the greening of the earth. Christ is risen and the whole world comes to life. Sap rises in dormant trees, spring peepers start their peeping, and trumpet lilies spill their sweet smell on the air. The connection is a happy one, guaranteed to renew our faith in the creative power of God.



Rev. Dr. Alvin O'Neal Jackson

But it is also a misleading one, because spring is entirely natural. Buy a daffodil bulb in the winter and it looks like nothing in your hands--a small onion, maybe, with its thin skin and scraggly roots. If you have had any experience with bulbs, however, that does not worry you. You know that all you have to do is wait. Come springtime it will escape the earth and explode with color, a yellow butterfly of a blossom shedding its cocoon. As miraculous as it is, it is completely natural.

Resurrection, on the other hand, is entirely unnatural. When a human being goes into the ground, that is that. You do not wait around for the person to reappear so you can pick up where you left off--not this side of the grave, anyhow. You say good-bye. You pay your respects and you go on with your life as best you can, knowing that the only place springtime happens in a cemetery is on the graves, not in them.

Death is natural. Loss is natural. Grief is natural. But on Easter we celebrate an unnatural happening. Stones have been rolled away to reveal a highly unnatural truth. By the light of the Easter day, God has planted a seed of life in us that cannot be killed, and if we can remember that, then there is nothing we cannot do!

We can move mountains!
We can banish fear!
We can love our enemies!
We can change the world!

The only thing we cannot do is hold on to him. He has asked us please not to do that, because he knows that all in all we would rather keep him with us where we are than let him take us where he is going. Better we should let him hold on to us, perhaps. Better we should follow him into the world.

This is absolutely my favorite time of the year and I look forward to greeting you on Easter Sunday at The Park and the week proceeding starting with Palm Sunday, Maunder Thursday and our Good Friday Services.

Happy Easter 2016!

EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

Join us for Worship, Study, Fellowship and Prayer @ *The Park*

WEEKLY HAPPENINGS



Sunday Morning Choir Rehearsals

Visit the online events calendar for more info on the Sanctuary/Gospel Choir rehearsal times.

Sunday Adult Bible Study

Adams Room (Room A), 10:00 AM

Sunday Children Activities and Study

Children's Corridor (Back Hall),
10:00 AM check in, 1:00 PM pick up

Morning Prayer

Monday and Wednesday Mornings, Sanctuary, 8:30 AM,
Join us in person or dial in at 605-477-2100, enter code:

121070# to join by telephone

Recorder Rehearsal

Tuesday evenings, Sanctuary, 6:00 PM

SPECIAL OCCASIONS

MONTHLY HAPPENINGS

Latino Initiative presents

Bilingual Bible Study

SECOND Sunday of every month, 10:00

AM, at *The Park*



Latino Initiative

Bilingual Worship Service

THIRD Sunday of every month, 1:30 PM, at *The Park*

Intercessory Prayer

FIRST Tuesday of every month, 6:30 PM, at *The Park*

Chinese-Christian Fellowship

SECOND and FOURTH Friday of every month, 6:30

PM, at *The Park*

Order of St. Luke Chapter Meeting

SECOND Saturday of every month, 1:00 PM, at *Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, 236 E. 31 Street, between Second and Third Avenue. Call, text, or email Pam for more info. 917-882-7667, bandpwood@aol.com*



Join Us for Our Easter Celebrations
Maundy Thursday, 7:00 PM

(Holy Communion and Foot Washing Service)

Good Friday, 12:30 PM

(Park Avenue Methodist Church on East 86th Street and Park Avenue)

Easter Sunday, 11:00 AM

(Brass, All Choirs, Baby Baptisms and Sunday School Easter Egg Hunts)

EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES



For Easter Sunday and Sundays following Easter we would like to fill the sanctuary with lilies. PARK members and friends are cordially invited to assist in this effort by donating lilies in memory or in honor of special people. Envelopes are also available in the pews should you wish to make a gift to help defray the cost of seasonal decorations. Donations large and small are welcome; we are joyfully grateful for your participation.

The cost for each lily is \$30.00. The lilies will remain in the Sanctuary for several Sundays or if you would like to take your lily and share it with a sick-and-shut in, please let us know and feel free to do so. In the space provided, please list the names of the persons you desire to remember or to honor. Also, indicate the number of lilies you are donating.

For more information please fill out one of the cards on the Information table in the Narthex and return to Stephanie Wilson, or visit: <http://www.parkavenuechristian.com/easter-lilies-form/>



Throughout Lent, join diverse members of our congregation as they reflect on verses from the Bible, offering their thoughts, insights, and prayers. Reflections will be issued every Monday, Wednesday and Friday during Lent, and every day of Holy Week. Visit <http://www.parkavenuechristian.com/newsletter-subscribe/> Be sure to select the REFLECTIONS email list.

SoulFood Fellowship for Spanish Speakers:

TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 6:30 PM. Meets in the home of Ismael Sanchez and Daisy Machado (Morningside Heights, Manhattan) and is led by Ismael Sanchez and Hugo Monroy.

SoulFood Fellowship @ The Park: SUNDAY, APRIL 24, 12:30 PM. Meets at the church and is led by Richard Sturm and Bruce Wood.



NEWS & NOTES

100 YEARS

On April 19, MAC SENTERFITT, will celebrate his 100th Birthday. Mac, a former active member of The Park, is an elder emeritus. He lives in the Boston area.

BIRTHS

Dearest Pastor Jackson and all,

It's been such a whirlwind, but I have to share that our daughter, LEILA SIMONE MERS PICKETT arrived February 27, 2016 at 4:25am weighing a healthy 7lbs. 8oz and 21 in long.



Her name -

Leila is derived from both Hebrew and Arabic origins, meaning "night," as she was born just before dawn.

Simone is named after Nina Simone, who I like to call our "modern prophetic songstress" such pain and hope in her music and in her life. Simone is also the feminine of Simon, meaning hearkening or in some Hebrew translations it can mean "God who hears."

Mers which is from my maternal family line and heritage, and Pickett which is JJ's family line.

We have been in the newborn haze for about a week! So much newness and lack of sleep! But we are all well and learning each day, each moment.

Life is such a gift and I am so excited to introduce you to her in person hopefully in the coming weeks. So until then, here's a couple photos of her.

Many, many blessings,
Chantilly, JJ, and Leila

DEATHS

Sympathy to family and friends of MELANIE GRIFFITHS, who died suddenly on February 26 in Canberra, Australia. Services were held in Bendigo, Australia on March 4. She was the niece of CAROL GRIFFITHS.

A memorial service celebrating the life of PATRICK MCGINNIS occurred on Saturday, February 20, at St Luke's United Methodist Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Patrick is survived by his wife of 43 years, RITA PAYNE MCGINNIS, sister of PACC member, MYRNA PAYNE.

HAROLD LOUTZENHEISER, an associate member of The Park, died suddenly in Canton, Ohio, on February 10. Harold and his partner, JAY BECKER, were on their way home from a trip to the Grand Canyon when Harold was taken to the hospital. Harold worked in NYC in the 1970s and was an active participant at The Park.

continue on page 6

Mission to Nicaragua, A Report from Marjorie Watrobski, Pastoral Associate



On January 9, representatives from UCC churches around New York State (Rochester, Syracuse, New York City, Brooklyn, Long Island, and one representative from Germany) travelled to Managua, Nicaragua, to meet with Misión Cristiana, a Pentecostal denomination we have had a partnership with for more than 20 years. We met with them, in part, to discuss opportunities for future mission trips and had a remarkable visit.

In the seven days we spent with our friends in Misión Cristiana, we got a taste of what future mission trips could be. We had the opportunity to do some work in 1st church where they are adding a 2nd floor to accommodate their growing after-school program. We also met some of the teachers and children of this program. We visited some tourist spots around the capital city, and also visited 29th church to see how the church is using an alternate fuel source with their Biogas stoves, and creating a sustainable seed-sharing program for local villagers to plant their crops. I have to admit, the pick-up game of soccer we had with the children at 29th church was a personal highlight for me!



I made some new friendships, renewed some old ones, and can't wait to see what comes next in this partnership. Plans are already under way for a spring trip next year (2017). There will be mission opportunities for many different ages and abilities with things like planting trees, helping with construction on another church, helping out in one of the school programs, or even fund-raising opportunities to help finance their ongoing renovations. Many of us who made this trip will be on hand at the joint UCC/DoC Annual Meeting in June to share our experiences and I would be very happy to do the same here at home (and there is no shortage of photos to go with the stories I can share!).

Retired Hellos



In January 2016, REV. JOSEPH ROBERSON retired as chair of PACC's Ministry Council, as well as from his position of Associate to the Deputy for Operations of Church World Service. He has settled in Raleigh, North Carolina, in new surroundings, and has joined a local Disciples congregation.

NEWS & NOTES

continued from page 4

VISITOR

On Sunday, February 14, we welcomed former member, the REV. VANESSA FALGOUST to worship. She and husband, ALAN COX, were in NYC for a concert at Lincoln Center. Vanessa is pastor of the Grafton Christian Church in Yorktown, Virginia.

NEW MEMBERS

YANG LI (STEVE) joined *The Park* on March 6, 2016. He is actively participating in the Sanctuary Choir and wishes to be baptized soon.



RETURN

Welcome Home to our regional minister, the REV. MARY ANNE GLOVER, who has been on sabbatical leave for four months. In her absence, the REV. DR. RICHARD STURM was acting regional minister.

MORE NEWS NOTES

REV. STEPHEN TICKNER was ordained at *The Park* on April 26, 2015. The installation of Rev. Tickner as Pastor will be Sunday, April 17, 2016 at 4:00 PM, at the Central Christian Church in Danbury, CT.

MARJORIE WATROBSKI, a student at New York Theological Seminary, and Pastoral Associate at *The Park*, participated in a recent mission trip to Nicaragua. (see article on page 5).

The REV. GEORGE SCHMIDT, ordained at *The Park* on June 17, 2015, was in Washington, D. C. on March 14-15, for his final interview for chaplaincy with the U S Navy.

STEPHENIE STOVALL, a candidate for ordination, under care of the elders of *The Park*, completed her semester's work as chaplain at the University of Pennsylvania (in Philadelphia), in January. She is now employed by BuildOn, an international organization that runs after-school programs in several U.S. cities, and builds schools in developing countries. She is currently on assignment in Nepal.

Community Saturday Lunch Program Resurrected!

By: Rev. Luis-Alfredo Cartagena
(Associate Pastor / Outreach)

One of the greatest joys of my years and ministry at the Park has been providing leadership and coordination for the Community Saturday Lunch Program and working with the many volunteers and partners associated with this program.

PACC's Saturday Lunch Program began October 28, 1989, when PACC member DAVID SCHMAUCH cooked a big pot of chili in our kitchen in the Adams Building. He and PACC member Jane Hovey served chili that afternoon to 35 hungry guests in the Fellowship Hall. As the lunch program continued, more volunteers from PACC as well as neighboring churches and the Temple gathered at PACC on Saturday mornings to help cook and serve guests who came for a hot meal. Some weeks we have served up to 200 guests who have come into our space to receive a hot meal and always love, care and affirmation from those who serve them.

Through the years of this program's operation, our neighbors have complained about our guests lining up on the sidewalk along E. 85th St., waiting to enter the Fellowship Hall for a hot meal. As we entered our relationship with the developer, Extell, concerning sale of our air rights in order to sustain our congregation's outreach, Extell was concerned about the logistics of the lunch program. Our response was always consistent: This is an important program, this is a significant part of our ministry and we are not going to discontinue it. We finally said to Extell, "If you are so concerned about this program, then a solution would be for you to endow it, and we will consider moving it to another location."

And that is exactly what has happened! Extell Development Company has endowed our Community Saturday Lunch Program and we are using this endowment as an opportunity to expand the program and explore new partnerships and possibly multiple sites.

We are going to use the next few months to engage in conversations with existing partners and new partners and do some dreaming and visioning about how we might better serve our neighbors in need. I invite you to join us in this exciting conversation and new opportunity. Please feel free to reach out to me, and/or SYDNEY AVENT, ERIC GUY, co-chair of the Mission Team, or to PASTOR JACKSON. We welcome your ideas and thoughts as we look to the future.

Resurrections still happen! Can't wait to see what God is going to do through us with our new Community Saturday Lunch Program!

Children & Youth Ministries at *The Park*

Join Us Each Sunday for Worship, Learning, and Play



Marjorie Watrobski

Update From Our Pastoral Search Team

On February 2, after submitting a Congregational Profile to denominational offices in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ, the Pastoral Search Team officially announced the opening of our congregation's Senior Minister position, effective mid-September, 2016. Interested candidates are sending their Search & Call profiles to REV. DR. BILL EDWARDS, Regional Minister of Ohio (who is our Disciples advisor for this search), and REV. DAVID GAEWSKI, Conference Minister of the New York Conference of the United Church of Christ. The application deadline is April 4, 2016, after which the Search Team will review all the profiles, seeking God's will in discerning the best person to call for our future ministry leadership. That review will probably take all of April and May, with a call likely to be extended in June or early July. The Search Team promises to keep the congregation informed about its work—and asks that the congregation keep the Team in prayer.

CPE Graduation at The Park on March 5, 2016

JAMES DYER, PEACHES GILLETTE, and UTHMAN BAKSH have completed a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education, under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Maria Lopez and Imam Abdas-Salaam Musa. The graduates recounted their experience in ministry among the incarcerated, including eloquent testimonials about what they learned along the way, particularly from one another, their instructors, and the incarcerated. The ceremony was heart-warming and impressive, and it was followed by a fellowship meal. The Park is most grateful that, in a time when many in our country vilify the imprisoned and Muslims and people of other faiths, we have this inter-faith mission outreach that affirms all God's children.

Prayer Ministry

EVERY MONDAY AND WEDNESDAY

Morning Prayers, 8:30 am, The Park. Join us in person or dial in 605-477-2100 and enter code 121070# to join by telephone.

PRAYER MINISTRY AFTER SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE

One of our Pastors, other Clergy or Elders are always happy to visit with anyone in need of individual prayer after worship. Someone will be stationed in the Chancel area each Sunday.

THE-PARK-PRAYS ON-LINE

To be added, contact Pam Wood, bandpwood@aol.com (or 917.882.7667, talk/text). As a member, you can post a prayer or prayer request.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

First Tuesday of each month at the church, 6:00 pm

Contacts:

Rev. Luis-Alfredo Cartagena - lcartagena@parkavenuechristian.com;
Hillary Buckland - candhbuckland@optonline.net

ORDER OF ST. LUKE THE PHYSICIAN

Healing prayer group, NYC Chapter meets monthly for worship, study and healing prayer. Contact Pam Wood: bandpwood@aol.com, 917-882-7667

Elders at The Park



Your Team of Elders continues to meet monthly to offer spiritual nurture and leadership for the congregation. This includes helping the pastor with concerns of the church, connecting with our shut-ins and friends near and far, and mentoring seminarians on their path toward ordination in the ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ. Look for word of another service of ordination coming up soon—and an installation service for Stephen Tickner at Central Christian Church in Danbury, CT, on April 17.

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The Forward...in continuous publication since 1899

Birthdays at *The Park*

MARCH

Elaine Williams 3/1
Anita Kelso Edson 3/2
Rebecca White 3/5
Elaine Cunningham 3/5
Rev. Luis-Alfredo Cartagena 3/5
Len Kamdang 3/7
Juanita Shacklett 3/8
Hillary Buckland 3/11
Lynda Banks 3/14

Rev. Ismael Sanchez 3/16
Joseph Hudson 3/17
Maria Alejandro 3/17
Grace Davis 3/17
Sarah Heltzel 3/19
Rev. Dan Clark 3/20
Bruce Wood 3/21
Jo Ann Ashley 3/22

Carlos Alejandro Jr 3/22
Connie Packard 3/28
Christian Wilder Wells 3/29
Carrie Nichols 3/29
Laura Bronson 3/30
Ima Jean Kidd 3/31
LaSaundra C. Estelle 3/31

APRIL

Pamela Wood 4/1
Margaret Rice 4/4
Wayne Reed 4/4
Rev. Carlos Alejandro 4/5
Rachel Payne 4/6
Jeff Fields 4/7
Marshalee McIntosh Jin 4/7
Michelle Archer 4/8

Lawanda Greene 4/10
David Bell 4/12
Aimee Mars 4/13
Arlene Virga 4/14
Ragnar Dixon Naess 4/16
Inji Walters 4/18
Jeffrey (Jeff) Wong 4/18
Ross Chitwood 4/18
Mac Senterfitt 4/19

David Winch 4/19
Chantilly Mers 4/20
Christopher Apgar 4/22
Rev. Dr. Peter Heltzel 4/25
Alan Walden 4/26
Kimberly Bell 4/26
Ephraim Tchandao 4/27
Linda Myles 4/27
Stephen Sekyiamah 4/27

MAY

Matthew (Matt) Chisholm 5/1
Lorraine Stewart 5/6
Victoria Pryor 5/6
Marilyn B. (Dede) Wilson 5/8
James Mills 5/9
Michael Virga 5/10
Peter Nadler 5/12

Will Matthews 5/14
Aduni Fashuyi 5/14
Andrew Virga 5/18
Kerwin Tesdell 5/20
Henry Hewes 5/21
Annika Walters 5/21
John Strybos 5/22

Claire Catherine Leyden 5/25
Troy Broughman 5/26
Monica Richey 5/29
Sally Mills 5/30
Jensene Payne 5/30
Patricia Dorsett 5/31

