



# The Park

PARK AVENUE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

*The Community of The Park*

*Summer Edition 2016*





# The Park

# FORWARD

A Christian Community that Embraces the Divinity of Difference

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## WELCOMING REVEREND KAJI DOUŠA AS SENIOR MINISTER OF THE PARK!



For the first time in its 206-year history, Park Avenue Christian Church in the City of New York has called a woman, Rev. Kaji Douša, to be its new Senior Minister. She will serve as the church's second African-American Senior Minister at the retirement of Rev. Dr. Alvin Jackson in September.

Pastor Douša has had extensive experience in church leadership. She currently serves as Senior Minister of The Table: United Church of Christ of La Mesa, just outside of San Diego, CA.

About her ministry, Kaji says: "I look for opportunities to empower people to reform and revive church and society. I focus on building connections, deepening a sense of Christian community of care, enriching a sense of Christian ethics through learning opportunities, and preaching God's love for all people in creative ways that refresh. I take great joy in seeing souls igniting for justice, connecting this spiritual and intellectual growth to the deep needs of our unjust world. My work is in

building the connections, inviting the Spirit, structuring systems of empowerment and growth."

"This is my work, it is how I spend every day: reminding the church of the vision God has for us, asking for God's help in clarifying that vision, injecting hope in places where the shadows have overcome."

This call marks Kaji's return to ministry in Manhattan, as she previously served on the staff of Saint Peter's Lutheran Church in Midtown. Of ministry in the city, Kaji reflects: "There is a rhythm to New York City. There is a pulse that carries its people to drive, create, imagine, challenge norms, encounter difference. The fascinating collection of souls who swell from 8 to 13 million each workday pulse through the city to a beat that runs fast. The pulse can inspire, or it can overwhelm. We are called to margins, to offer a word of hope that allows that pulse to bring good, new life. We are called to the edges, to offer warmth to counter the impulse to run cold, to make space in a culture where expansiveness feels a luxury, to put people together for meaningful engagement that says *do your thing: but you don't have to do it alone*. Making compassionate connection in New York City is no simple task. But it is a ministry to which I know myself to be called."

Previously, Kaji served Plymouth Church in Minneapolis as sabbatical minister. Additionally, she was a pastoral resident at the Village Church in Wellesley, Massachusetts, and associate pastor at the First Congregational Church of Darien. She was a chapel minister at Yale Divinity School's Marquand Chapel. She is an active writer for the United Church of Christ's Stillspeaking Writers' Group that sends a daily devotional to over 35,000 subscribers.

Kaji is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and of Yale University, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree cum laude and a Master of Divinity degree. At Yale, she concentrated on liturgical arts while enrolled at the Institute of Sacred Music, and was named Louise H. MacLean Scholar of Liturgical Studies. She won Commencement Prizes for Excellence in Preaching and Excellence in Liturgical Scholarship and Innovation.

Before entering the ministry, Kaji developed new products for a large financial services company on Wall Street. She also has a political background, having managed and staffed several successful campaigns.

Her first Sunday will be October 2. Visit <http://www.parkavenuechristian.com/> for more information and [www.kajidouosa.com](http://www.kajidouosa.com) for links to her sermons and writing.

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# 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, AUGUST BREAK

### 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



You are invited to join us for an

Evening of Joy and Celebration  
**Mississippi Boulevard  
Christian Church**

70 North Bellevue • Memphis, TN.

September 30, 2016

Friday | 7:00 PM

For additional information contact:

**Eva Haddix-Anderson**

901.483.7280 • [Anderson.eva@theblvd.org](mailto:Anderson.eva@theblvd.org)

**Joyce McAnulty Blackmon**

901.528.0956 • [jblacassoc@aol.com](mailto:jblacassoc@aol.com)

**Rev. Sonia Loudon Walker**

901.482.1508 • [slwgreatideas@aol.com](mailto:slwgreatideas@aol.com)

## MONTHLY HAPPENINGS

### Latino Initiative presents Bilingual Bible Study

SECOND Sunday 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

SUMMER INTERMISSION, RETURNS IN SEPTEMBER 2016

### 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](mailto:bandpwood@aol.com)*



**SoulFood Fellowship for Spanish Speakers:** SUMMER INTERMISSION, RETURNS IN SEPTEMBER 2016

**SoulFood Fellowship @ The Park:** LAST SUNDAY OF EVERY MONTH, 12:30 PM. Meets at the church and is led by Richard Sturm and Bruce Wood.

## Pastoral Search Team Announcement

In the fall of 2015, a Pastoral Search Team was nominated and elected to begin the search for a Senior Minister to serve Park Avenue Christian Church after the retirement of Alvin O. Jackson, in mid September 2016. The members of this Team were Connie Packard, Heather Bickham, Maria Lopez, Nadeige Sekyiamah, Rebecca Stanton, Kent Edwards, Johnson Liu, Carl Buckland, and Richard Sturm (as chair). Under the counsel of denominational advisors (Bill Edwards, Ohio Regional Minister, for the Disciples; and David Gaewski, New York Conference Minister, for the United Church of Christ), we solicited prayers and suggestions from the congregation, and conducted Holy Conversations, to articulate both a Congregational Profile and a Pastoral Profile; the former described as accurately and faithfully as we could our self-understanding at The Park, and the latter characterized the experience, skills, gifts, and graces we saw as needed in our Senior Minister.

The position opening was officially announced at the beginning of February 2016, with an application deadline of April 4. The weeks of April through May were spent prayerfully reviewing 35 profiles from ministers in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ. It was a labor of spiritual discernment, involving several strong candidates, but it was also work aided greatly by technology, so that we could not only review profiles, read essays and statements from the candidates—but also see and hear them preach, read their blogs, and gain insights inaccessible not many years ago.

One candidate was exceptional, and all nine members of the Search Team spontaneously came to that conclusion. This was one person whose spiritual depth, eloquence in preaching, pastoral sensitivity, gifts in administration, stewardship, and passion for justice excited all nine of us. We found providence at work in matching the candidate's needs and longings with ours. After an in-person interview with the Search Team, we set out to prepare a mutually acceptable Senior Minister Job Description and Financial Package for a call toward shared ministry. With all that good work behind us, we recommended this candidate to the Ministry Council at its regularly scheduled May 24, 2016 meeting, and the Ministry Council unanimously affirmed the recommendation. This same recommendation was made to the Congregation—and it was unanimously confirmed by ballot vote at its Congregational Meeting on June 19, 2016—to call the Rev. Kaji Douša, presently Senior Minister at La Mesa United Church of Christ in San Diego, California, to become our Senior Minister here at Park Avenue Christian Church in Manhattan, beginning in September, 2016.

### Here's additional information on Rev. Kaji Douša:

Ordained Ministries: The Table: United Church of Christ of La Mesa, CA (9/2013), a congregation that has grown 20% since Rev. Douša's first day, 80% with young families. She was nominated for La Mesa of the Year for their ministry to immigrant children of South and Central America; she is a writer and editor of the UCC's Stillspeaking Writers' Group, and is publishing a book of children's justice-based Bible stories (due out later this year).

Before that, she served as Sabbatical Executive Minister at Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis; for three years as an associate minister at St. Peter's Lutheran Church here in Manhattan; at Wellesley Congregational Church in MA; and the First Congregational Church of Darien, CT.

Before answering a call to ministry, she worked on Wall Street, managing teams of over 75 persons and multi-million dollar budgets.

Education: University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, with a major concentration in Health Care Management; and Yale University, in New Haven, CT, where she earned a Master of Divinity. With concentration in Liturgy at the Yale Institute of Sacred Music at Yale Divinity School (a link with our own congregation through Clementine Tangeman, the Institute's major donor, and Elder at PACC for 30 years).

Passion: She is passionate about what we here have professed as our own passionate concerns—social justice, anti-racism, radical welcome, building community, being called to the margins, reaching out with pastoral care, bringing compassion to those in need, and working for shalom in NYC. She knows what we're struggling with, including our Development Project and Capital Campaign, and she's grateful to be considered to join us in addressing the challenges involved—which she names as opportunities for profound ministry.

Members of The Park had the chance to meet Kaji, her husband Patrick, and their nearly two-year-old daughter Caeli, on Saturday, June 18, and again on Sunday, June 19, when our Congregational Meeting included the vote of calling.

Finally, the Pastoral Search Team recognizes historic significance in such a call: In our 206 years as a congregation, we will be welcoming as our new Senior Minister a woman as our first full (rather than Interim) Senior Pastor, our first Woman of Color, and our first minister from our congregation's partner denomination in which we are covenanted, the United Church of Christ. To all of this, the Search Team hopes that you will join us in saying, Thanks be to God!

*Richard Sturm, on behalf of the Pastoral Search Team*

# NEWS & NOTES

## BIRTHS

EILA OPHELIA SUBLETT was born May 28, 2016. She weighed 8.2lbs and measured 20.5 inches long.

Note from Scott and Sandy:

*We are so happy to be home safe and sound after an extended stay in the hospital. Once we were home we were blessed to have both Scottie and my mother stay with us for the month of June while we adjusted to being parents of a newborn. It was a really special time. Scottie and I are in love with our baby girl—she couldn't be a more wonderful newborn. Eila Phee, as we call her, is very happy all day—she smiles, coos, and interacts with us already. She also sleeps 4-5 hour stretches at night! We're looking forward to seeing the little girl, young lady and woman she will become.*

TRISTAN TROOP HELTZEL was born June 12, 2016 weighing 7lbs and measured 20 inches long.



## NEW MEMBERS

SOCRATES ERNESTO ECHAVARRIA MENDEZ joined *The Park* on June 12, 2016. He has previously assisted with the Saturday Community Lunch Program and the Immigration Clinic.



## VISITORS

The following guest choirs performed at *The Park* in May and June.

HILLSIDE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, JUNE 5



BERKSHIRE CHILDREN'S CHOIR, MAY 22



NEW YORK MIXED CHORUS, JUNE 19



## BAPTISMS



ELLA JEAN MRA



LANGSTON JONATHAN GRANT



HEIDI OKADA AND JACK RYAN ROESLER

## New Leadership

**Rebecca Stanton,  
Ministry Council Chair**



Originally from Nebraska, found *The Park* via a connection with Lifeline. She joined *The Park* in 2012, and has been an Elder since 2013. Besides being a frequent marcher in the Pride Parade, Rebecca is a jubilant member of the Gospel Choir, and volunteers at the Immigration Clinics. She lives in Washington Heights, and teaches English as a second language at Community Health Academy of the Heights, a 6-12 public school in Washington Heights.

**Scott Sublett,  
Ministry Council Vice Chair**



Scott and his wife, Sandy, have been members of *The Park* since 2013 after visiting regularly for several years. Scott currently serves on *The Park's* Finance Team. He is a private equity investment professional at a New York-based family office. Scott was born in California and grew up outside Houston, Texas. He lives in Yorkville with Sandy, their adopted dog, Tanya and their newborn baby girl, Eila Ophelia Sublett.

**Rev. Ismael Sanchez,  
Ministry Elder**



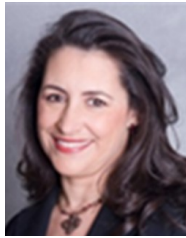
Rev. Sánchez currently serves as Associate Pastor for Latino Ministries at Park Avenue Christian Church where he is working to create a holistic Latino worship community that can embrace diversity

with a spirit of hospitality. Rev. Sánchez is married to Rev. Dr. Daisy L. Machado who serves as professor of Modern Church History at Union Theological Seminary in NYC.

*New Leadership continued on page 6*

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**Anita Edson,  
Deacon Chair:**



*A photojournalist who works for the ASPCA (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), the country's oldest animal welfare organization. Prior to living in NYC and joining The Park, Anita and her husband, Scott, lived in Dallas*

*where they were members of Northway Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). She has also represented the ASPCA in cruelty investigations and disasters, such as the 2009 Missouri dog-fighting case, Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Sandy, and the Joplin, Mo. tornado. Anita and Scott's household includes two adopted cats, Mary J and Dora.*

**Alexander Cook, Deacon**

*Alexander Cook joined as an associate member of The Park on October 11, 2015. He came to NYC to study at the Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theatre, and has been invited back for a second year. He sings with our choirs and assists Saya as music librarian. He grew up in Fort Worth, Texas, the son of two Disciples ministers. He has developed a "physical ministry" class for seminary students. This summer, he is an intern at the Disciples Crossing Camp and Retreat Center in Athens, Texas.*



**Hannah Taylor, Deacon**



*Hannah has been part of the PACC family since 2009. She works on child health programming for communities throughout sub-Saharan Africa, travelling often to countries throughout the continent. She lives in Harlem with her partner, Dennis, and her dog, Charlie.*

**Steve Yang, Deacon**

*Steve Yang initially joined as a volunteer in the Church Choir. He is now a member of The Park as of March, 2016.*



## 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**

Each Sunday after worship, one of our Pastors, other Clergy, or Elders will be stationed in the chancel area to visit with or assist anyone in need of individual prayer.

**THE-PARK-PRAYS ON-LINE**

To be added to this network, contact Pam Wood, [bandpwood@aol.com](mailto: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](mailto:lcartagena@parkavenuechristian.com);  
Hillary Buckland - [candhbuckland@optonline.net](mailto: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](mailto:bandpwood@aol.com), 917-882-7667




**Free Immigration  
Legal Services Clinics**

There will be an Immigration Clinic training session at *The Park* on **Thursday, July 21, 6:00 PM** for those who wish to serve as volunteers for the Clinic. Bilingual and multilingual volunteers are especially needed. If you speak Spanish, Haitian Creole, French or Mandarin Chinese, we welcome you to join us. The first clinic of 2016 will be held **July 23, 10:00 AM** at *The Park*.

Please contact Stephanie Wilson at [swilson@parkavenuechristian.com](mailto:swilson@parkavenuechristian.com) or 212.288.3246 to RSVP for the training or to schedule an appointment to meet with one of the immigration attorneys during the Clinic.

## Update on the Closing



Pictured here are Connie Packard, Ministry Council Chair and Pastor Jackson meeting in her home on Monday, June 7th to signed the closing documents on our development project at 1010 Park. What a journey it has been! The Ministry Council started looking for a developer in 2007, and resumed in 2011 after the economic crisis of 2008, and here we are in June 2016 actually closing on a project that will allow us to do ministry in new and meaningful ways for many years to come. To God be the glory!

The church has taken \$12 Million of the proceeds from the closing and established a permanent fund -- the Hampton Adams Endowment Fund -- with only the interest being used to fund mission and ministry. We will celebrate the establishment of this fund on Sunday, July 17th during the 11 am worship with special guest, Dr. Harry Baker Adams, son of Dr. Hampton Adams who served Park Avenue Christian Church as Senior Minister from 1954 to 1965.

We will still need to do some additional fundraising in order to complete the new building as well as repairs and improvements to the Sanctuary. Stay tuned for more to come!

## Regional Assembly Check In

The NEW YORK CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST and the NORTHEAST REGION OF THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST met in a joint assembly June 10-12 in Rochester, New York. The theme for the Assembly was "Let Justice Roll"- Amos 5:24 - "And let justice roll on like a river...." The Keynote speaker was Rev. Dr. William Barber, Pastor of the Greenleaf Christian Church, Goldsboro, NC. There were workshops and business sessions and *The Park* had great representation.

One of the ongoing concerns for the Region is its future and to that end in March, the Regional Board approved the formation of a Futuring Team and a Back Pay Team.

### **The goals of the Futuring Team are to:**

1. develop a viable Interim Plan for Regional Ministry that can be implemented Jan. 1, 2017.
2. develop a Long Term Plan for Regional Ministry and a strategy/process for implementing that plan.

### **The goals of the Back Pay Team are to:**

1. confirm the amount owed to the Regional Minister for back salary and benefits from 2008 to the present.
2. recommend a debt service repayment plan.

In order to address the immediate issue of continuing debt accumulation, it will be recommended that the Executive Board and the Personnel Committee work together to develop a revised contract for regional ministry that will be financially viable.

PARK AVENUE  
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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



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### Birthdays at *The Park*

#### JUNE

Susan Jaquith 6/1  
LaToya Nelson 6/1  
Lyntonia Coston 6/6  
Nicole Castro 6/8  
Christina (Tina) Zizzo 6/8  
Maia Alejandro 6/8  
Randall Tucker 6/9  
Steven Crumb 6/10  
Stephenie Stovall 6/14

Emily Cunningham 6/16  
Melissa Little 6/17  
Raymond Verrey 6/17  
Diane Paulsell 6/19  
Bess Terry 6/21  
Benjamin Louis Pagano 6/22  
Beth Mandelbaum 6/22  
Kyle Hawkins 6/24  
Jean Wirth 6/24

Jessica Wray-Nieves 6/24  
Rachel Frey 6/26  
William J. Vila 6/29  
Elizabeth Cooper 6/30  
Karon Bihari 6/30

#### JULY

Nelson Gomez 7/1  
Jenny Xie 7/2  
Allen Foster 7/4  
Sandra Sublett 7/4  
Bonnie English 7/6  
Michaela Guy 7/6  
Stephen Epps 7/7

Georga Osborne 7/7  
Ted LeFevre 7/8  
Rev. Dr. Alvin O. Jackson 7/10  
Ariana Zizzo 7/11  
Brad Bond 7/16  
William Giles-Tesdell 7/21  
Jonathan Mars 7/21  
John Lau 7/22

Jana Nordquist 7/23  
Audrey Choi 7/26  
Betty Lau 7/26  
Aaron Levitt 7/27  
Gregg Bevenssee 7/28  
Heather Bickham 7/29  
Karin Coonrod 7/31

#### AUGUST

Ashley Stafford 8/4  
John Virga 8/5  
Mary Searl 8/6  
Rev. Mary Anne Glover 8/6  
Norma Eicher 8/7  
Claudia Highbaugh 8/9  
Dona Vaughn Raines 8/13

Donna Bevenssee 8/13  
Wade Payne 8/14  
Onleilove Alston 8/18  
Jack Shuler 8/23  
Nancy Nicalo 8/23  
Wendy Bagger 8/24  
Noel Cline 8/24

Eric Guy 8/25  
Peter Lynett 8/27  
Rev. Jennifer Crumpton 8/29  
Jeannie Walden 8/31  
Francis English 8/31

