

# UPDATE

June 2016

## Lincoln Park Presbyterian Church

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June is busting out all over!

The year moves on, and we are nearing the halfway point (summer solstice is June 20th in case anyone wanted to participate in some kind of festival). Chicago continues to experience probably the best weather it will have all year, and we are taking advantage in full.

This month's Update has some upcoming notes for summer I know you'll be keen to see; the clerk's report, which not only kindly repeats Ben Ho's reflection on Acts in honor of Pentecost, but also sums up what LPPC has to look forward to, including our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary coming up this October. If you want to come up with an elaborate tribute, as I'm sure you will, please start planning now so that it is extra-magnificent.

Update also contains two articles, one about a workshop on racism, something we in Chicago

are heart-pangingly aware of, and an update on the fight against redistricting, or gerrymandering. The women's book group carries on its long tradition with a poignant work by acclaimed author Ann Patchett, and we have a bevy of birthdays coming up, which I urge you to investigate.

See you on Sunday,

Alice Burton



Dear Friends,

A couple of weeks ago, the Worship Team met and had a good discussion about plans for the summer. During the past couple of summers, we have gone all out to plan services that are fun and a bit different and that include barbecues and potlucks and were opportunities for outreach in the community. By the end of last summer, it was clear that most of us were feeling fatigued by the amount of effort required by many fewer people due to travel schedules and vacation time. Given all of that and given that we are beginning to form teams for the Compassion Project, we decided to keep it simple. Having said that, we are really excited about what is in store for us this summer for worship! Last evening the Session approved the plan and this is what it entails:

Sundays, June 5, 12 and 19 - worship is at 10:30 am in the sanctuary and the choir will sing some.

Saturday, June 25 - Saturday evening at 5 pm we will do worship in the Dreyer Room. There will be NO Sunday worship on June 26th due to the Pride Parade. All who want to march in the Parade will meet at LPPC at 10 am for donuts and then to ride the train together to the parade route.

Sundays, July 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 and August 7, 14, 21, 28 and September 4 - worship will be at 5 pm in the Dreyer Room. There will be no Sunday morning worship at 10:30 am. Our 5 pm worship times will be followed by Time for Refreshment and though we may have an occasional dinner together, we are not planning dinner for each Sunday. We will be doing a variety of worship experiences with an emphasis on experience. We decided that rather than fight our smaller numbers, we would use them to our advantage and explore some worship opportunities we haven't explored yet.

Many of you expressed that you like the later worship time on Sundays during the summer. The Worship Team is really excited about trying some new ways to worship that will involve experiencing worship and not just being present for worship. As always, we hope you will come with open minds and hearts, come as often as you are able, participate in worship leadership (it will be somewhat different than being liturgist and may change week to week) and greeting and providing refreshments when you are able, give us helpful feedback along the way and relax into a summer season of worship.

We are still working out plans, but we might do a barbecue for our first evening worship on Saturday, June 25th. Stay tuned!

Looking forward to a summer of simplicity and meaning,

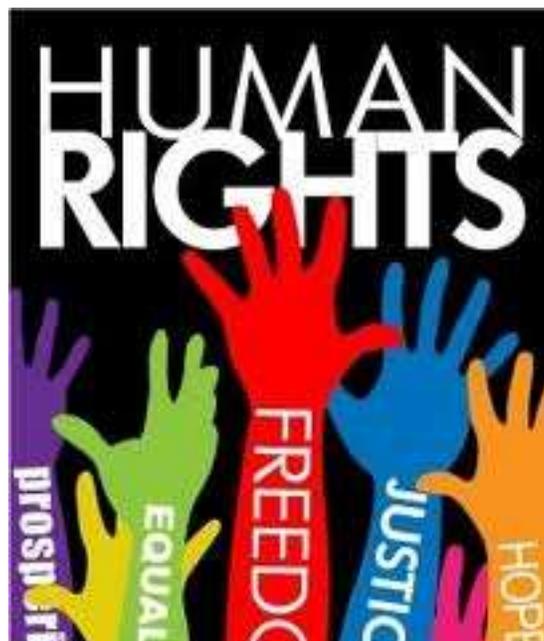
**Beth**

PS Due to the change in format, Leticia is going to be working Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays during the summer and not on Fridays. This will begin the week of June 20. Fernando will work later on Sundays to accommodate the change in our schedule, as will Chungers. We are fortunate to have such a flexible staff!

### **Clerk's Clippings: The Holy Spirit at Work in the Early Church and at LPPC**

The Session met Tuesday, May 24 this past month, and Ben Ho provided the opening reflection and prayer. Here are his timely thoughts and prayer:

*Listening to the news and watching what is going on in American culture today, it is easy to be disheartened by the exclusion and demonization of the "other" around us. Presidential candidates call for building walls along the Mexican border and deporting Muslims. Some legislatures attempt to marginalize transgender people and allow discrimination against LGBTQ people in the name of religious freedom.*



*But in this season of Pentecost, we can take heart in the inclusive*

*actions of the Holy Spirit in the early church. First, the Holy Spirit spoke to everyone at Pentecost, regardless of nationality: "... the Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism), Cretans and Arabs...." (Acts 2:9-11a).*

*In Acts 10, God goes further and abolishes the distinctions between Jew and non-Jew. "About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up to the roof to pray. He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. Then a voice told him, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.' 'Surely not, Lord,' Peter replied. 'I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.' The voice spoke to him a second time. 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.' This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.... While talking with Cornelius, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. He said to them, 'You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has showed me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean.'" (Acts 10:9-16, 27-28)*

*Imagine how stunned Peter was to hear that distinctions that were at the core of Jewish identity, distinctions that separated them from the Gentiles, were to be ignored!*

*Many American Christians have come to define Christian identity as affirming what they see as traditional American values. How stunning to imagine the Holy Spirit telling us to accept the Mexicans, and the Muslims, and the LGBTQ among us. Peter listened to the Holy Spirit. Can we as a country do the same?*

*Let us pray.*

*Holy Spirit, God of us all, and God with us all, you amazed those gathered together at Pentecost in the book of Acts, and you amazed Peter with your stunning inclusiveness. Continue to amaze us today, and spur accepting and inclusive love locally in this congregation, nationally in this divided country of ours, and around the world.*

*In Jesus' name we pray. AMEN.*

After this reflection, we looked back at the previous month, and lifted up what had gone well, not so well, and what we had learned. We celebrated the powerful worship service on Pentecost Sunday, especially blowing up balloons, and letting them go, which really made the point about never knowing where the Spirit will take us. The **"Spring Soiree of Song"**

was a wonderful event: the energy from all the musicians, the amazing music, Chungers' leadership, the great spirit – a great evening! We were disappointed in the attendance however, and hope next year to do a better job with publicizing the event and inviting more people to attend. The “On the Table” event engendered good conversation among participants, but we had hoped for more diversity in participants. However, it was an exciting first step: participating with the Shelter in this event, and getting to know some members of our community better. The discussion was also a good beginning point for **the Compassion Project**. At that point in the discussion, we shared personal joys and concerns.

Barry Smith joined us for a portion of the meeting to discuss two different efforts. First of all, he proposed that we should donate the very extensive David Sindt archives, which include the early history of the More Light movement in our denomination (a movement to promote the inclusion and ordination of LGBTQ persons in our denomination), to the Presbyterian Historical Society. David was an active member of LPPC, and the founder of the More Light movement. The Presbyterian Historical Society would be delighted to receive this extensive collection. The Session was very pleased to support Barry's proposal.

The second reason that Barry joined us was to discuss beginning plans and ideas for celebrating LPPC's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, coming up this October. We are planning to celebrate this anniversary the weekend of October 21-23. Potential plans include a welcoming reception for out-of-town “alumni/ae” on Friday night, a fun event for everyone on Saturday night, which might be a fundraiser (or not), and special liturgy as part of morning worship on Sunday. Save the date cards will go out soon to everyone who has participated in the life of LPPC over the past 50 years (as many as we can think of and find addresses for!), so we invite folks to send names and addresses of anyone who should be invited to the church office. Barry is working on a history brochure, as well as a photo display. More to come – stay tuned!



Our May Focus Topic was “Next Steps in the Movement for Compassion”. We discussed and clarified the roles of the three Project teams: the Creative Team, the Space and Green Team, and the Tech and Outreach Team. We agreed this was a critical time to provide leadership to this process. At the same time, we want to engender other leadership and participation from the congregation for the teams, but we are committed to getting the process started. Each Session member volunteered to work with one of the teams. Then we discussed ways to encourage congregational participation and leadership in this process and these teams.

We thought about the congregation and who might be appropriate for each team. Each of us agreed to ask members and friends to serve on the three teams. We agreed that it would be ideal for the three teams to begin work in June. So be expecting a call or conversation with an elder about what you might contribute to this process!

Paul Strome, Bookkeeper, and Beth Brown have been reviewing the 2016 budget, and have discovered some anomalies, as well as some items that needed clarification. They had prepared a revised budget for 2016 which clarified several categories, and cleared up some earlier confusion. After discussion, the Session voted to approve this revised and balanced budget.

We took several other actions at this meeting. They included the decision to discontinue LPPC's participation weekly in making sack lunches for LPCS guests, while encouraging individuals who want to continue making lunches to volunteer with the Shelter to do that. We also approved a changed schedule and plan for worship for the summer. In July and August, we will be worshipping on Sundays at 5 p.m., likely in the Dreyer Room, or when it is pleasant outside, on the front lawn. Worship services will be simpler and experiential – come and experience what this will be like!

This was a Spirit-filled meeting. In this Pentecost season, It seemed that we were living out Ben's prayer to be amazed, once again, by God's stunning and inclusive love among us, and hoping to spread that love throughout our community and in the world.

*-Gail Russell, Clerk of Session*

## **Recognizing Racism in Our World**

On April 16, Gerri Mead, Gail Russell, and Marianne Nesler traveled to the First Presbyterian Church of Homewood to attend the Presbytery-sponsored "Introduction to Systematic Racism." It was a full day!

The leaders are members of CROAR, the Chicago Regional Organization against Racism—a regional program of Crossroads Antiracism Organizing and Training. Their goals were to deepen our understanding of structural racism and to develop concrete ways to begin to alleviate racism in our institutions.

Activities were varied: listening to lectures, reflecting on topics in small groups, making posters to depict symptoms of structural racism visually, watching a movie describing how the legal definition of "white" has changed throughout U.S. history. While the day's activities somewhat overlapped with those of our Lenten Study of Racism, the program reinforced and broadened the understanding we gained from the LPPC study..

For instance, our LPPC group rated our church on a continuum of movement towards becoming an antiracist, multicultural institution-- an activity that some attempted in our Lenten Study. We noted that the more we learn about racism, the more we realize how much more has to be done to reach the goal of a truly inclusive church.

The journey has begun, but it is far from complete. A similar workshop will be held on Saturday, October 1, at Friendship Presbyterian Church. A 2 1/2 day program is also planned. Stay tuned for more information about these anti-racism workshops to be held in the fall.

*-Marianne Nesler*



## Whatever Happened to That Anti-Gerrymandering Petition?

Thanks to so many of you for signing the petition—either here at church or at other sites--to put the “gerrymandering amendment” on the November ballot. This amendment would make the state’s redistricting process more transparent and non-partisan. For this proposal to make it to the November ballot, it must meet a Board of Election examination of the petition signatures and it must survive any court challenge. The first requirement has been met, but a court case is pending.

**Board approval:** During the last year, 620,000 signatures were collected. Members of the Independent Map not-for-profit coalition reviewed the petition pages, eliminating duplicate and illegible signatures. On May 6 the coalition submitted over 570,000 petition signatures to the Illinois State Board of Elections (ISBE)—almost twice the number needed to be on the ballot. The signatures were in a 36-foot long metal box that contained 65,261 petition pages and weighed about 1800 pounds. The Board then took a computerized sample of 5% of the signatures to make sure their “validation rate” is better than the 290,216 signatures needed. The Independent Map group monitored the process.

On May 24, the coalition announced that the ISBE had approved putting the redistricting amendment on the ballot. The ISBE sampling indicated that around 390,000 valid signatures were submitted, far exceeding the required number.

**The next big challenge:** Not unexpectedly, a lawsuit was filed against the proposed amendment--on May 11, less than a week after the petition was submitted. The basis for this legal challenge is a provision in the Illinois Constitution that greatly limits amending the constitution by citizens' petition —that is, without going through the General Assembly. The court case argues that the anti-gerrymandering amendment does not meet this constitutional restriction. This legal challenge could possibly take until August, when it could reach the Illinois Supreme Court.

**Other referenda?** Most often, a proposed constitutional amendment gets on the ballot by being introduced in the General Assembly (GA) and getting at least a 3/5 vote in each House. The following proposed amendments introduced this session were not approved by the GA: 2 different proposals on redistricting, the elimination of the office of Lieutenant Governor, and the establishment of a graduated income tax. However, the GA did approve a gas tax "lockbox" amendment proposal to be on the November ballot. This proposal would require all Illinois state transportation-related levies, such as the gas tax, be used only for transit-related projects, operations, and debts.

We will try to keep you updated on the status of the redistricting amendment proposal.

*-Marianne Nesler*

### **Women's Book Group**

Essays blending literature and memoir in "This Is The Story of a Happy Marriage" by Ann Patchett will be discussed at the Women's Book Group on **Saturday, June 11**, in the Lighthouse Lounge on the 14<sup>th</sup> floor of The Admiral at the Lake, 929 W. Foster Ave.

All women are invited to a social time with light refreshments beginning at 9:30 a.m. followed by the book discussion, which will start promptly at 10 a.m.

*-Sharon Stangenes*

#### **June Birthdays**

<b>4</b>	<b>Michael Devlin</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Edmund Bradfield</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Abby Dufel</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Delia Chou</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Barbara Guibord</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>Hannah Russell</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>Don Hunter</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>Charles Rich</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>Lucas Devlin</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>Jack and Kate O'Donnell</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>Alex Wilkinson</b>