

## SCHEDULE OF ADVENT EVENTS:

All free and held here at church

### ADVENT FESTIVAL

A family-friendly event that teaches about Advent in fun and interactive ways. Come decorate cookies, take a photo with Jesus in the manger, build gingerbread houses, and send greetings to missionaries around the world. A mini-concert led by our children and youth choirs will conclude this fun two-hour event. A great opportunity to invite your friends with kids. Volunteers are welcome and needed!

**WHEN:** Saturday, Dec. 5 3-5pm

**CONTACT:** Carla Urban  
cjdurban@gmail.com

### CAROLING AND COMMUNITY SUPPER

Help us spread Christmas cheer in the Central Neighborhood through an evening of intergenerational caroling. Our church youth will lead informal groups of joyous carolers to nearby houses (both walking and driving options available). Afterward, the United Methodist Men will host a chili dinner for any/all who wish to attend. Volunteers to help with the dinner are appreciated.

**WHEN:** Sunday, Dec. 13

3pm Caroling, 4:30 Supper

**CONTACT:** Rebecca Reeth

paul-rebecca@usfamily.net or  
Bryan Bergh bryanbergh@visi.com

### CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Always a must-see concert to fully appreciate the Park Avenue experience! Featuring Park Avenue choirs and special guests.

**WHEN:** Sunday, Dec. 20 at 4pm

**CONTACT:** Martial Besombes

martialbesombes@parkavechurch.org

It's the season for PIE.

"We must have pie. Stress cannot exist in the presence of pie."

*Playwright David Mamet*

"Vegetables are a must on a diet.

I suggest carrot cake, zucchini bread and pumpkin pie."

*"Garfield" creator Jim Davis*

"I am more American than apple pie. I'm like apple pie with a hot dog in it."

*Stephen Colbert*

"When you die, if you get a choice between going to regular heaven or pie heaven, choose pie heaven. It might be a trick, but if it's not, mmmmmm, boy!"

*Jack Handey*

"You like pie? I like pie."

*President Barack Obama*

## INQUIRERS ... AND CONNECTORS ... WANTED!

Are you interested in learning more about Park Avenue Church or becoming a member? Our next "Inquirer's Class" series will be held January 3-10-17 for an hour before Sunday 10am service. Advance sign-up is requested.

If you're already a member and are interested in sharing your gift of hospitality, we are developing a program where new members are "connected" with longtime members to introduce, include, and steer them toward activities they're interested in being involved with.

For more information on becoming a member or connector, email Kathy Rainey at [klrainey@comcast.net](mailto:klrainey@comcast.net)

## YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND ...

**JOIN IN "A CONVERSATION ABOUT PARK"** with our new District Superintendent, Dan Johnson. Wednesday, Dec. 16 at 6:30-7:45pm in the Gathering Room.

### Did you know we have a new vision statement?

Our vision is to be a vibrantly Christ-centered, multi-racial, multi-ethnic intergenerational instrument of transformation, actively engaged with our urban neighborhood and our world.

[www.parkavechurch.org](http://www.parkavechurch.org)

PARK AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 3400 PARK AVENUE MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55407



# Park Avenue Newsletter

Advent edition 2015

To receive this newsletter by email, sign up at [newsletter@parkavechurch.org](mailto:newsletter@parkavechurch.org)

### IN THIS ISSUE:

Advent Schedule of Events

Pastor Will's Pie Humor

Sound System Improvements

Inquirer's Update



### FROM THE DESK OF Pastor Will Healy

Several months ago, Pastor Cynthia was sharing with me some teaching she'd been doing on the subject of "**border crossings**". The idea here is that we often find in Scripture (and at times in our own lives) the challenge to traverse borders – borders of familiarity, of comfort, even of safety.

As we began discussing that idea, it occurred to us that this would make for a compelling theme as we journey together through the season of Advent here at Park. Advent is a time of expectant waiting, a chance for us to reflect on the new life the birth of Jesus makes possible for us. In order to enter that new life, we face "border crossings" of many kinds – those necessary challenges and opportunities that come our way whenever we seek to move in a new direction.

At the same time, we live in a world where too many of the border crossings human beings face are not by choice. 2015 has been a year of painful reality for millions in our world who have been brutally displaced by the forces of war and greed, as this riveting picture would remind us, a Syrian mother and her child, refugees who have found temporary shelter in Germany.



*Is it even possible to not see the connection to Jesus and Mary in their faces?*

As we once again anticipate celebrating the birth of our Savior, we give thanks to a God willing to cross so many borders for us – the border between heaven and earth, between generations, between economic disparities, even borders of our own making between a broken humanity and a grace-filled God. Here is the One who will stop at nothing to "come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel."

## A CALL TO PRAYER

Praying for our community as we continue to lament the sadness and violence affecting our sisters and brothers in North Minneapolis:

**We pray** for those from our Park Avenue family who live or work in communities most closely affected by recent events.

**We pray** for those answering a call to peaceful protest, that they would know the support of the body of Christ as they stand for justice.

**We pray** for all those who suffer as a result of any act of violence. We pray God will comfort the family and friends of Jamar Clark – for those who knew him, loved him, and love him still.

**We pray** for the police, first responders and government officials who seek to bring order, security, and safety to our city – may they do so with discernment, compassion and courage.

**We pray** for all (and especially our children) who feel a sense of vulnerability, isolation, insecurity and fear at this time.

**We pray** that the Prince of Peace would reign in our hearts and in the hearts of all who seek peace. **Amen.**

## SOUND SYSTEM UPDATE

If you've ever been challenged with hearing all that goes on in worship at Park, you'll be glad to know we have been blessed with a generous donation from a member who requested that the funds be used to upgrade our aging sound system in the Sanctuary!

You may have noticed that there were areas in the Sanctuary where there was very little coverage from the ceiling-mounted sound system. We are replacing the cluster speakers with new speakers on each side to solve that problem and we hope you notice the results. With some additional funds, we were able to make some additional high-priority improvements to the choir monitors and the pulpit microphone.

This completes the first phase of sound system improvements project. Because worship time and music is such an important part of our worship experience, we are committed to finding ways to continue to make improvements to the sound system: better coverage of balcony area, replacement of crossover DSP (unit for frequency allocation), replacement of declining sound board, sound treatment for the drums and better microphones for enhanced speech intelligibility.

Please contact Minister of Music Martial Besombes for more information on how you may be able to assist us in making the next improvements possible.

## GOD'S ACTION FIGURES

Rev. Cynthia Williams

A few weeks ago I attended the annual gala for *Matter*, a nonprofit on mission to expand access to health and food, next door and around the world. It caught my attention when one of the speakers referred to the many donors and volunteers as action figures. Action figures!

"The Avengers" superhero team were brought together to pull the world back from the brink of disaster. Each Avenger was equipped with unique powers, skills and personalities. No two are alike.

### **At Park Avenue, WE are God's action figures.**

We have been uniquely formed, fashioned, gifted and called. We are individually animated, empowered and infused with the Holy Spirit and called to collectively use our gifts, resources and God-given power to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. As we use our super power, our vision of a transformed world begins to take shape.

The Avengers know that the task they have been given is too great for any one person to accomplish alone. Collaboration, communication and playing to their strengths are critical. Likewise, there are partners - action figures who are helping us achieve our vision.

Our partnerships with St. Mary's Clinic provides free healthcare for our neighbors.

Our partner, Volunteer Lawyer's Network, gives countless hours of free legal advice. Tenant partners Joyce Preschool and Dinomights meet the needs of parents and children in our community.

There are action figures in our Central Neighborhood we have yet to identify. We are being more intentional as we go beyond the walls of our building and invite our neighbors to come dance, eat and play with us at our "Park in the Neighborhood" series during the month of July. I remember a Somali neighbor came and introduced himself as Spider-Man ... we need him on our team! We met over 250 children as we created a safe alternative to Halloween during our "Trunk or Treat" event.

On December 13, we will take our multiracial, multiethnic, intergenerational selves to the streets to warm hearts through Christmas caroling and as we invite our neighbors to follow us back to the church for to share chili.

These are but a few ways that we are dipping our toes in the water - taking the first steps in developing relationships that will be important to our work of transformation. We continue to live into our vision, open and alert to meet needs and take advantage of opportunities to use our super power for good.



We met over 250 children as we created a safe alternative to Halloween during our "Trunk or Treat" event. One of our neighbors shared this note afterwards ...

*"We are very appreciative for the trunk or treating at the church lot. Our neighborhood block is desolate during trick or treating. It's awesome for our family to have a place to celebrate Halloween that is not only safe but enjoyable for us and all of the families in the neighborhood."*



*From a volunteer participant in last year's caroling ... Thank you so much for helping organize and host such a wonderful event! I have so many wonderful memories from tonight, although none more powerful than meeting Ron, a man who lives in an apartment on Portland Ave. He opened his 2nd floor window and serenaded us while we sang to him, leading us in "White Christmas." After sharing Christmas cheer with him he joined us for dinner at the chili feed and seemed to connect personally with a dozen Park folks from ages 15 to 60+. At that same apartment building we (for the second year in a row) sang to a Hispanic family with small children, our most enthusiastic listeners! We provided them with a flier translated into Spanish inviting them to dinner, and you know what? They came and had chili with us!*

*That one apartment building provided confirmation that the Holy Spirit was in this event. Thank you to all who planned, encouraged, cooked, sang and prayed for this event. You all helped provide me with a "God Sighting" tonight.*

SOME EXAMPLES OF OUR ADVENT THEME ...

## BORDER CROSSINGS

THAT ARE TAKING PLACE,  
EVEN WITHIN OUR OWN NEIGHBORHOOD.

## OVERHEARD AT PARK AVENUE

"Any ideas for those of us who aren't so used to singing from words on a screen rather than notes on a page?"

Glad you asked. At Park, our diversity carries over to music ministry and worship, and we have all come from different backgrounds. Classic pipe organ and hymn singing is interspersed with contemporary praise & worship songs and various styles of gospel music. Our music ministry leaders are aware that only having lyrics to follow on the screen can be a stretch for those who "read" music with notes, but a little stretching is good for all of us.

If a song is unfamiliar to you, it's fine to just LISTEN. Don't worry about making the words on screen match the notes, just ponder the message or enjoy the melody. We guarantee that the next time that same song is chosen, your music memory will kick in and you'll feel the melody come right back to you.

Watch the praise team - you'll notice who's leading - they'll often call out the next line in the "oral tradition" style, which will help you follow along. There are hand gestures, too - like baseball signals - that the singers and musicians follow. The praise team isn't always certain where the next verse is going to kick in either, or if the chorus will continue repeatedly - they follow the leader and so can you.

For those of us who are better at reading music, take this style of worship as a challenge. It's very liberating to listen, hear the rhythms, and be able to worship spontaneously without strict adherence to written notes or having your nose buried in the hymnal.

So relax, and follow along! We're celebrating our diversity - in all things.