

**SCHEDULE OF SUMMER**

**EVENTS:** Subject to change – but plan ahead and save the dates!

- MAY 7** **Glory Be's Choir**  
at Midtown Global Market 2:30pm
- MAY 8** **Mother's Day Choir and Hat Sunday**
- MAY 13** **All Church Bowling**  
6-8pm Elsie's
- MAY 18** **Wednesday Evening Activities end**  
(except for Prayer)
- MAY 29** **Celebration of Rev. Cynthia Williams** after service
- JUN 4** **Vacation Bible School Prep**  
9-11:30am  
(also June 11 & 12)
- JUN 13** **Vacation Bible School**  
through June 20 9am-noon
- JUN 20** **Children's Defense Fund Freedom School**  
through July 29
- JUN 21** **MN Annual Conference**  
in St. Cloud
- JUN 22** **Ordination of Min. Jesus Purisaca**  
in St. Cloud
- JUL 13** **Park in the Neighborhood Prayer Walk**
- JUL 20** **Park in the Neighborhood**
- JUL 27** **Park in the Neighborhood**
- AUG 3** **Birthday Bash: Park in the Neighborhood**
- AUG 9** **Camp MSP through Aug. 11**

**CREATION CARE – WORKING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

*"It's not really up to us to save the world – we already have a savior. We're called to do what we can – to explore ways to live in greater harmony with God's creation."*

**Interested in being an Earthkeeper?**

Earthkeepers are described as United Methodists who are "aware of the ecological challenges in our world today and feel called to be part of a movement to transform the world." They can be laity or clergy, students, part-time or full-time workers, or retirees. But many of those passionate about creation care aren't always sure how to organize and engage others around a common cause. That's why the Earthkeepers training and quarterly meetings will be so critical. Earthkeepers participate in four days of intensive training in Creation Care theology and community organizing, then commit to 10 hours per month of providing leadership for a community project or advocacy campaign. Each Earthkeeper selects his or her own project or focus area. These might include efforts like creating community gardens in urban "food deserts," advocating for renewable energy policies, working for environmental justice by cleaning up toxic waste sites, or creating a green team within our church

Applications for the first group of Earthkeepers will

*(Earthkeepers, cont.)*

be accepted through June 30. They must commit to quarterly meetings with other Earthkeepers in their region in order to receive ongoing support and training.

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For more information, go to our website's main page at [parkavechurch.org](http://parkavechurch.org) or to [minnesotaumc.org](http://minnesotaumc.org)

*Excerpted from an article of the Minnesota Annual Conference: United Methodist Church.*

**FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY COMPLETES SESSION**

FPU is a biblically based curriculum that teaches people how to handle money God's way.

As leader Kent Karnick says, "We all need a plan for our money."

The nine-week class covers how to pay off debt, manage a budget, and still give away money. The attendees encourage each other with their own personal experiences of what they learned each week. One attendee was good-naturedly teased because she would not spend her money the way some others thought she should. She responded,

*"I tell my money what to do. The money does not tell me what to do."*

She has taken control of the use of God's money.

Plans are underway to have another class in the fall. Watch the [parkavechurch.org](http://parkavechurch.org) website or visit [FPU.com](http://FPU.com) for more details.



FROM THE DESK OF Rev. Cynthia Williams

The Talmud tells the story of an old man who was planting a carob tree when a king rode by.

*"Old man," the king called out, "how old are you?"*  
*"Seventy years, your majesty," the man replied.*  
*"How many years will it take before that tree will bear fruit?" the king asked.*  
*"Perhaps seventy years," the man answered. Mockingly, the king went on, "Do you really expect to eat of the fruit of that tree?"*  
*"Of course not," the man said, "but just as I found fruit trees when I was born, so do I plant trees that future generations may eat from them."*

Like the story in the Talmud, when I joined the faith community of Park Avenue, I was clear that I was one in a long line of planters who had planted trees that had borne much fruit. I knew God had called me to till soil and plant seeds during my season with an understanding that I would not necessarily be around to eat much of the fruit.



**Park Avenue Newsletter**

IN THIS ISSUE  
**What's happening this summer!**

Well, God has been gracious. Over the past thirteen years, I have had the gift of bearing witness and savoring the fruit that is abundant among us as we seek to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world". What a joy it is to have come with you through many seasons of change to the place we are today.

Paul in Galatians 5 writes that as we live together, stretching and being stretched, in sunshine and rain, dying and living, God brings about radical transformation.

*God brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard – things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to*

*force our way in life, but able to marshal and direct our energies wisely.*

*Galatians 5:22-23 The Message*

As I prepare to leave you, this is the fruit I most savor. It is the fuel that will energize you in the years ahead. I rejoice in the trees each of you will plant as you do your part in the years to come; to sharing your seeds and making Park Avenue Church such a vibrantly Christ-centered, multiracial, multiethnic, intergenerational instrument of transformation, actively engaged with our urban neighborhood and our world.

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*Pastor Cynthia will be leaving us to begin a new role as District Superintendent of the River Valley Conference with the United Methodist Church.*

*Her last Sunday with us will be May 29, and we will honor her with a time of recognition after the 10:00am service. In lieu of gifts, Pastor Cynthia asks that a donation be made in her name to our Children's Defense Fund Freedom School.*

## SUMMER PROGRAMS AND KIDS CAMP INFO



**Camp MSP: Mission, Service, Purpose – August 9-11, 2016**

Camp MSP is an urban day camp for kids going into 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> grades. Our Park Avenue kids and one or two adult volunteers will gather with groups from other Methodist churches to have fun while serving neighbors and meeting new friends. For example, last year we tested water quality, played bells at a retirement home, pulled buckthorn, helped organize a thrift store, and played games.

The church will cover the \$35 registration fee. If you're interested in sending a student or being an adult volunteer, email Carla Urban and she will send details.

### SLEEP-AWAY CAMP UPDATE

While Park Avenue Church won't be organizing a coordinated summer sleep-away Bible camp experience for elementary or middle school students this year, families interested in Bible camp are welcome to coordinate with each other.

Some options include:

Trout Lake Camps  
Pine River, MN

Camp Minnesota  
Various locations

Camp Shamineau  
Motley, MN

### FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CAMP MSP OR VBS, CONTACT:

CARLA URBAN  
cjdurban@gmail.com  
612-379-8083



## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (VBS)

**SURF SHACK: Catch the Wave of God's Amazing Love!**

Each day at the Surf Shack, kids will encounter powerful water stories from the Bible that illustrate God's awesome love for us. We will explore God's mission for our lives through games, crafts, science and Bible stories, and discover how to live out God's amazing love.

**Join us Monday, June 13 through Friday, June 17, 9am to noon each day, here at the church.**

There is **no charge** for Vacation Bible School, but we need to know how many kids to plan for, so pre-registration is required. There is a form on the website or found at the Welcome Center.

**REGISTRATION MUST BE RECEIVED BY JUNE 6.**

We are also looking for **adult and youth volunteers** to help with VBS. If you can come all 5 mornings, or just one or two, we'll find a role for you! Use your gifts to guide kids through science experiments, help with crafts, serve snacks, tell Bible stories.

There are lots of options, and they're all fun!

## VBS PREP & DECORATING

Help us prepare for our Surf Shack Vacation Bible School! We will make signs and decorations, gather supplies for craft and science projects, and pull together equipment for games. Everyone is welcome!

**GENERAL PREP on Saturday, June 4 and Saturday, June 11, 9-11:30am** in the Children's Village.

**DECORATIONS** will be put up **on Sunday, June 12, 3-5pm**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CONTACT:**CARLA URBAN  
cjdurban@gmail.com  
612-379-8083



## PARK IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD- YEAR 3

"Park in the Neighborhood" is a series of Wednesday night community events held on the blacktop ... a relaxed and fun way for the church to go outside of its walls and build relationships with the community in which we worship.

This year's events will take place 6:00-8:00pm on the following Wednesdays:

- July 13th (Prayer walk)
- July 20th
- July 27th
- August 3rd

The August 3<sup>rd</sup> date will feature an important birthday celebration; stay tuned for more information and how to volunteer or participate in this annual community event.

## NEIGHBORHOOD EVANGELISM OUTREACH UPDATE

God is moving in amazing ways, as our Outreach team has discovered as they venture out into the neighborhood on Friday evenings.

In fact, they didn't need to even leave the blacktop recently, as people began to gather when the team, led by a trained evangelist, began to talk and share with neighbors. Scott Bookhout, the organizer of Outreach, shares this story.

"Adan, a young man in his early teens, was moved to tears as he shared how he knows God loves him and how he felt God's love and presence with him during a surgery. He accepted the invitation to let Christ into His heart. After this I noticed Wayne, a young man in his mid-teens, was still standing nearby on the blacktop, listening. I asked him if he was ready to accept Jesus into his heart, and he said he was. We continued for several minutes, encouraging them and praying for God's Holy Spirit to fill them."

"Another boy by the name of Octavio was very interested in what we had to say, leading to yet another brother accepting Christ. By this time, many of the smaller children had approached and assisted the prayer as we prayed for Octavio, with their little hands reaching out and touching him on the shoulder. Both Octavio and Adan received Spanish Bibles; Wayne already had a Bible of his own."

"Being bold and courageous with sharing our faith is not something that comes easy to many of us. Coming together as a body - praying, worshiping and equipping

(evangelism continued)

the outreach first allows us to move forth with power and boldness."

Please pray and come join this exciting and bold endeavor - it can't be done alone. *There is something for everybody.* In addition to those willing to evangelize, there is always a need for those who:

1. Stay behind and pray while the team is out in the neighborhood
2. lead worship before they depart
3. organize follow up with those reached
4. organize light snacks after the outreach as the team debriefs and fellowships back at the church.

The Outreach team meets at 6:30pm in the Gathering Room every Friday (except the last Friday of the month, when they join with a partner outreach) and ends about 9:00pm. Commit as the Lord leads; whether hourly, weekly or monthly, in any capacity. But the time to make a difference is now - partner with God as He is moving in our neighborhood and city.

**For more information,** contact Scott Bookhout  
612-721-6144 or  
pamscott@usfamily.net

## DID YOU KNOW ...

Our Freedom School received a perfect score on Program Quality from the Children's Defense Fund ...

AND scored higher than the national average on their reading evaluation?

Contact Michelle Higgins for more ways you can be part of this success: 612-825-6864 ext. 518, or to contribute, mark checks with "CDF".

## WOMEN'S RETREAT NEW LOCATION RECEIVES HIGH MARKS

After many years of the Women's Retreat being held at Camp Koronis in Paynesville, this year's committee made a bold move and reserved a new location: Heartwood Resort & Convention Center in Trego, WI.

Even though the cost was higher, over 80 women attended (the most in five years!), with scholarships and transportation provided to anyone who needed financial assistance.

*"I was new to Park Avenue, and immediately became immersed in the women's retreat planning.*

*I am so glad I did because I was able to witness sisterhood and God's love in the hearts of 85 women."*

-- Gwen Gness

The weather was unseasonably brisk but the grounds were beautiful. Bald eagles and deer sightings were common; and awaking to fog rolling across the lake was often mentioned as a highlight of this unanimously popular new location. Linen tablecloths, exceptional meals, maid service and edible flowers were certainly some of the more pampering aspects of the weekend, but challenging breakout sessions, spirit-filled worship, and music ministry rounded out the experience.

Many thanks to those who served and led this experience and to all who attended. Planning has begun already for next year (a May 5-7 date has been reserved) and the team hopes to see many new faces.

It's a wonderful way to get to know other women in the Park Avenue family!