



October 2009

# SPIRIT IN THE PARK

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE MORGAN PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## MPUMC HONORS CARISA PARKER

On Sunday, September 13, 2009 the Morgan Park United Methodist Church presented the James Swearingen Academic Achievement Award to Carisa Parker. This award comes with a check for \$1000.00.

This award is presented to a member of the church who completes a bachelor's degree with a B or better grade average and who has been actively involved in the life of the church.

The fund was established in 1976 upon the death of James Swearingen. Mr. Swearingen was an active member of Morgan Park UMC and was a lifelong educator serving as a teacher, principal, coach and finally as President of Chicago Teacher's College, now Chicago State University.

Ms. Parker is the mother of four children – Christopher, a 13 year old 7<sup>th</sup> grade student at Morgan Park High School, Carinne, age 10 and Erica, age 5, both students at Turner Drew Academy and Erin, age 3. Carisa graduated on June 13, 2009 from DePaul University receiving her BS degree with a concentration on African American Studies. She works at Trinity Hospital in Chicago as the Nursing Office Coordinator. Carisa plans to continue her education by pursuing a master's and then a doctorate degree.

At Morgan Park UMC Carisa is involved in ministries with children. She is currently serving as the Sunday School superintendent and has taught in both the preschool and elementary classes. Along with other young women of the church, she also participates in the Little Sis Expo, a mentoring program for teenage girls. Her mother, Laura, and brother, Edward, are also members of the church.

The Morgan Park United Methodist Church family heartily congratulates Carisa on her academic achievements and thanks her for sharing her time and talents with the children of our church.

**CONGRATULATIONS CARISA!**

## OCTOBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

**OCTOBER 4, 2009**

World Communion Sunday  
Holy Communion  
"Reforming the Law of Moses"  
Psalm 26 and Mark 10:17-27

**OCTOBER 11, 2009**

"God Alone"  
Job 23:1-17 and Mark 10:17-27

**OCTOBER 18, 2009**

Laity Sunday

**OCTOBER 25, 2009**

Youth Sunday  
Micah Briggs will preach.

## CHURCH CONFERENCE

**Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup>**

Parlor – 10:30 a.m.

**(SPRC meeting at 10:00 a.m.)**

Church Conference is an annual all-church meeting convened by the District Superintendent or an appointed church elder.

It is a time of celebrating the ministry of the church, a time for looking back and looking forward. It is at this meeting that we elect new 2010 church officers, set the pastor's salary and provide a "State of the Church Report".

*All members are invited and encouraged to attend. All officers, team leaders and committee chairs are expected to participate.*

Please Note...

All reports are due in the office  
no later than Sunday, October 4<sup>th</sup>.



# CROP WALK

## October 18, 2009

*Submitted by Anne Genther*

Sunday, October 18<sup>th</sup> is the date of the 2009 CROP Walk to end hunger. Since 2006 Morgan Park UMC has raised over \$5000.00 through donations and support of walkers from our church.

A little background about CROP Walks: CROP Walks are held all over the country and are sponsored by Church World Service, a cooperative ministry of 35 Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican denominations. Their goal is to provide sustainable self-help and development, disaster relief and refugee assistance in some 80 countries. The United Methodist Church is one of the denominations. This will be the 27<sup>th</sup> annual Chicago CROP Hunger Walk. The goal is at least 1000 walkers raising over \$100,000.00 to raise awareness and fight hunger.

Hunger is a worldwide problem. People either do not have access to food or cannot afford to buy the food that is available. Over 850 million people around the world don't have enough to eat. Nearly one in three children worldwide are hungry. CROP Walks provide funds to help. 25% of the money raised by the Chicago CROP Walk stays in the local community to support local hunger fighting agencies.

There are several ways you can be involved with the CROP Walk. You can sign up to be a walker and secure donations to support your walk. You can donate to those who are walking. You can sign up to be a volunteer on the day of the walk (there are a variety of jobs that are needed to help the walk be a success). If you have questions you can talk to Elaine Reynolds or Anne Genther.

To join or support our church's participation in the CROP Walk through the Internet please go to [www.churchworldservice.org/goto/mpumc](http://www.churchworldservice.org/goto/mpumc) or go to our church website, [www.morganparkumc.org](http://www.morganparkumc.org) and click crop walk.

Please be generous when you are approached to support a walker and if you are not approached please seek out a walker to support. Together we can reach our goal and help the hungry near and far.

## PRAYER GARDEN

*Submitted by Laura Parker*

In response to the need for an area for prayer at the church, the Church and Society Committee will be creating a special area outside. A Memorial Garden and Meditation Area will be installed on the south lawn under the stained glass window.

On Sunday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, All Saints' Day, when people receive communion, they will take a flower bulb from the altar back to their seats. After church, we will go outside to the garden area to plant these bulbs in prepared spots.

Frank Hawkins will spearhead this project, preparing the garden on October 31<sup>st</sup>. The committee is looking for volunteers in two areas: 1) helping to prepare the garden on Saturday and 2) donating bulbs for the garden, especially ones from your own garden.

We are asking people to donate a variety of bulbs such as, lilies, canna lilies, gladiolas, tulips, hyacinth and daffodils. This will provide a garden that will bloom all spring and all summer.

Please contact Frank Hawkins, Laura Parker, or Yvonne Brown to let them know how you will participate.

*Thank you for helping  
make this beautiful spot for  
meditation and prayer.*



## ALL SAINTS' DAY

### November 1, 2009

In a special insert we will print the names of those who have passed away **since last All Saints' Sunday** (November 2, 2008). If you want to include your loved ones, please give the name(s) to the church office. During Communion we will lift up those names printed and the congregation will also be given the opportunity to name their loved ones who have passed away in previous years.

## Domestic Violence AWARENESS MONTH

*Submitted by Laura Parker*

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. As the grants coordinator at the Crisis Center for South Suburbia, an advocate trained on the religious aspects of domestic violence, and as a member of the Church and Society Committee of MPUMC, I want to bring this important issue to your attention,

In our news reports, we often see and hear about women who are victims of abuse by someone who is supposed to love them. Some of those we hear about die. Some disappear.

The Crisis Center was started 30 years ago in the kitchen of Dianne Masters with a group of dedicated women. Soon they realized women needed a place to stay to escape abuse, and they moved into a rented farmhouse. And then one day, Dianne disappeared. Months later her body was discovered in the trunk of her car at the bottom of the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal.

This is not a pleasant thing to write about. Domestic abuse is not pleasant. I can't paint a pretty picture of the physical and emotional pain and suffering that women and their children experience. I can however, paint a picture of hope.

*"Since my sons and I have come to the Crisis Center for South Suburbia I have accomplished many things. I have obtained my driver's license, car insurance, and have maintained its upkeep. I have discovered a church to which I can go and feel comfortable. Both of my sons are in school and thriving. They have both become more relaxed since leaving the abuse. They can talk to me now about the abuse and the trauma they have gone through.*

*In coming to the shelter I have gained a certain courage that I have not known before. I now know that I have people to turn to for help and resources. I now know that my support system understands without judgment. I now know I have support to help me grow to be the person that I want to be. I now know how to motivate myself and strive to make a better life for my children. I am now a better role model and I look forward to no longer walking on eggshells. I will continue to do what feels right for my boys and me."*

Women need to know help, support, safety, and a future free of abuse is available. **WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

1. If you know someone who might need a resource, ask them to call the Crisis Center for South Suburbia at 708-429-SAFE.

2. Attend a Candlelight Vigil on October 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at the Tinley Park Village Hall, 16250 Oak Park Ave., to remember victims and to honor survivors.
3. Check out the website of Faith Trust Institute - <http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org>.
4. Ask your friends and neighbors to contact me (708-429-7255) about speaking to their group, place of employment, or church.

Crisis Center for South Suburbia



### Candlelight Vigil

October 8, 2009  
6:30 p.m.

**Tinley Park Village Hall**  
16250 Oak Park Avenue

**Join us in standing together in honor and memory of victims of domestic violence.**

For more information please see Laura Parker.

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

*Submitted by Samantha Morek & Laura Parker  
Nurture Co-chairs*

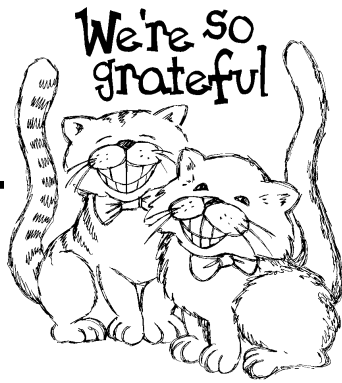
Welcome to Micah Briggs, our new Youth Pastor. We look forward to continuing our youth ministries under his leadership.

Nursery and Children's Sunday School are back in session. Thank you to Carisa Parker, Crystal Hill, Breanna Radtke, Don Jaburek, Rosaline Langley, Sarah Briggs, Germaine Desruisseaux, Arlene McGee, and Regine Desruisseaux for committing to these services for our children. If you are interested in helping with these ministries, please contact pastor Choi or Carisa Parker.

Adult Sunday School is continuing under the capable teaching of Pat Hawkins and Owen Skelly. This is a class that challenges our knowledge about the scriptures and the way we live out our faith.

The Disciple series will be taught by pastor Choi this year. We are grateful for her commitment to this class and invite you to attend to receive life-changing resources and to discover the God-given purpose you have been created to fulfill.

Our spiritual education is important in our faith journey. Please prayerfully consider your participation in these ministries.



*Submitted by the Outreach Team*

Two little words – **THANK YOU** – can not convey how we feel about the wonderful support all of you at Morgan Park UMC give to the projects of the Outreach Team. Two recent activities were the school supply collection for Esmond School and the bake sale to raise money to support our Rainbow Covenant mission projects.

Through your generous purchases of baked items we raised \$175.00 toward our financial support of projects both here and overseas.

We were able to deliver to Esmond School bags and boxes of notebooks, notebook paper, crayons, glue, scissors, pencils, pens and other school supplies. There were over 700 items or packages of items in all. A donation of money to purchase supplies was even received from Lillie Mae Clark, a former MPUMC member and Esmond graduate, who now lives in Florida.

The staff that helped to unload the supplies were so appreciative of your donations. Many children and teachers will have the supplies they need to have a great year of learning.

Thank you for your continued support of Esmond School and the children of Morgan Park.

## **WELCOME MICAH O. BRIGGS OUR NEW YOUTH PASTOR!**

Micah O. Briggs was the youngest of three children raised in Omaha, Nebraska. After his parents divorced he was raised in a single parent home with his mother and two sisters. Micah was suffocated by anger as a result of being abandoned by his father and molested by a babysitter at the age of 5. This was the beginning of his downward spiral in the public school environment. Micah would travel back and forth between Omaha and Phoenix, Arizona, living with his mother and biological father for the remainder of his school years. There was no escaping the enticing lure of the high profile drug dealers and the highly feared and

pseudo respected gang members, who rapidly turned some into instant celebrities while sending countless others to the state penitentiary and the cemetery. The inspiration to attend college and run cross-country and track and field fueled Micah and steered him from the street life, which engulfed his neighborhoods in both Omaha and Phoenix.

Directly after leaving high school he joined the United States Army but his defiant attitude and abhorrence toward authority figures didn't change so after 14 months in the military he was discharged and sent home with nothing. Back in Omaha it became apparent to him that a high school diploma alone would not be his ticket out of the destructive cycle of poverty, addiction, and violence in his immediate surrounds. So he walked away from the dope game and picked up two jobs. One job was a janitorial position and the other was a maintenance man at McDonalds. When he was not working he started volunteering at the local Boys Club while he tried to find a way to get into college. The following fall semester he was enrolled in Langston University, in Oklahoma.

Still trapped in a cycle where he dealt with emotional residue by drowning his sorrows in self-destructive ways Micah academically succeeded in college while slowly losing his mental sanity and emotional stability. Running out of ways to deal with the pain that was deteriorating him from the inside out, he gave his life to Jesus Christ in his freshmen year of college but that was only the beginning of the journey. Shortly after his conversion he was introduced to Kids Across America Camps, in Golden, Missouri. It was there where he was reminded of the jewels of wisdom that his grandfather and numerous others had tried to share with him years prior. All of the puzzle pieces started to fall into place.

After many ups and downs along the journey, Micah began to walk in his calling as a minister of the gospel where he started using his gifts of public speaking, reciting poetry, and rapping to glorify his Heavenly Father. Now Micah has a bachelors degree in education and a master of science in youth and family ministry. Micah has been teaching on the high school level, coaching high school athletics, community outreach with local area non-profits, collaborating with social advocacy groups and working hands on in youth ministry over the past 10 years. This proud father of two writes poetry and speaks to youth across the country encouraging them to choose Jesus Christ as the true advocate of ultimate justice, who can and will change the cycles of single parent homes, fatherless children, violence, poverty, sub par education, and addictions that plague our communities.

**PLEASE NOTE**...*The Lay Leadership Development Committee* is seeking members who are interested in church leadership positions and/or would like to serve on committees and teams.

***Please see pastor Choi.***

## SEVEN-WEEK BIBLE STUDY *"Claiming the Promise"*

The Reconciling Committee is offering the Bible study class "Claiming the Promise." The start date has not as yet been determined. Individuals interested in taking the class can sign up in the parlor or call the Church office. Once several persons have signed up for the class, Don Jaburek, Chair of the Reconciling Committee, will coordinate and arrange a convenient class time.

The Reconciling Committee recently completed the course and wanted to share their thoughts with you.

*"Taking this class on Reconciling Ministries has given me an awareness of how much the Lord loves all of his children, and that we need to be more Christ-like".* Pat Hawkins

*"The Reconciling Committee Bible study opened my eyes to the Bible's inclusive words of love for all God's children."* Don Jaburek

*"Claiming the Promise class taught me different interpretations of scriptural references that are used in talking about homosexuality. It was very enlightening – one of the best Bible classes I have ever taken."* Laura Parker

*"I have always believed that God loves all his children. This class is an unbiased way to teach various biblical translations of Hebrew and Greek text. I was able to understand the scripture on sexual behavior in a profound spiritual way."* Yvonne Brown

*"To be a part of the Reconciling Ministry Study course has been both a blessing and a challenge. The blessing was working with a dedicated group of church members. The challenge was committing the study time and class time to accomplish our study."* Eileen Fay

### **CLAIM THE PROMISE!**

Sign Up for the Class by November 1<sup>st</sup>.

**UNITED METHODIST WOMEN**  
Meeting  
**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10<sup>th</sup>**  
11:00 a.m. – Parlor  
*Submitted by Anne Genther, UMW President*

On Saturday, October 10, 2009 the United Methodist Women will gather for a meeting at 11:00 a.m. in the parlor. We will have a business meeting, fellowship and a program on the World Thank Offering. All women are

invited to attend and be a part of this group. You do not have to be a member of the church to belong to United Methodist Women. You do need to be supportive of the purpose of the organization, which is:

*The organized unit of United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.*

**Please remember to bring your thank offering to this meeting.**

## Halloween Fun

(New this Year)



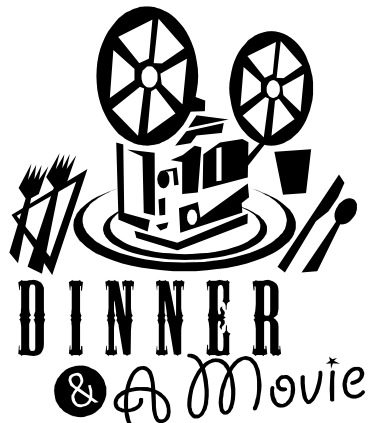
**Sunday, October  
25<sup>th</sup>  
Following Coffee Hour**

The Nurture Team is planning a full Sunday of Halloween fun for the children of our church. They will begin the celebration during Sunday school on October 25<sup>th</sup>. Games, crafts and special treats are promised.

"Trunk or Treat" will begin following the Sunday coffee hour. Adults attending are being asked to decorate their cars and bring treats to pass out to the children from their car trunks. (Kind of like a "sweet treat" tailgating party.) Check your weekly Sunday bulletins in October for more details.

**MPUMC  
RECONCILING COMMITTEE**

Invites All Members & Friends  
To



**"FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO"**

**Friday, October 16<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 p.m. – Light Supper

7:00 p.m. – Movie & Popcorn

Through the experiences of five very normal, very Christian, very American families, this award-winning documentary, offers healing, clarity and understanding to anyone caught in the crosshairs of scripture and sexual identity.

**CHILDCARE**

**Special Children's Movie and Snacks**  
(During the viewing of "The Bible Tells Me So")

Northern Illinois Conference  
**UMW ANNUAL MEETING**

**Saturday, October 24, 2009**

First Korean UMC

Wheeling, IL

The featured speaker will be Martha Knight, the new treasurer of Women's Division. There will also be election and installation of officers, pledge service, music and Korean dancing as well as a wonderful meal and a chance to look at resources and learn more about programs of the United Methodist Women.

Join with sisters from across the Northern Illinois Conference to worship, fellowship and learn.

If you are interested in attending or want to know more talk to Anne Genther (773-881-1788).

**UMW FUNDRAISER  
ENTERTAINMENT 2010 BOOKS  
Now on Sale!**

*Only \$20 each...Entertainment 2010 is packed with even more fun and savings than ever before... the best that entertainment has to offer. You'll find hundreds of two- for-one coupons, 50% off coupons, and other spectacular discounts on fine and family dining, fast food, movies, sporting events, activities, special attractions, travel, hotels and retail merchants.*

**GREAT HOLIDAY GIFT IDEA!**

**Help support UMW missions.**

Order your book today!

Contact: Gertrude Preyar: (773) 233-2017

Church Office: (773) 238-2600

**PASTOR CHOI RECEIVED THIS LETTER** from Cyriacus Akas, friend of Carolyn McPherson through her work with prison ministry, who is waiting in Etowah County Detention Center for a decision as to whether or not he will be deported. If you would like to correspond with Cyriacus his address is:

Cyriacus Akas, 026-201-961 827

Forrest Avenue

Gadsden, AL 35901

Dear Rev. Choi & Congregants:

*May the peace and grace of the (Lord) multiply to you. On behalf of my family and me, we would like to say; thank you for the prayers.*

*I truly thank the Lord for providing this church the opportunity to play a part in my life. To know that there is a church standing in the gap for my family and it is quite invigorating to say the least. Words cannot express my heart-felt gratitude. Moreover the church action reassured me of the hands of God in my life; perhaps most importantly that God is not done with me, especially, at lowest period of my life. Furthermore, this epitomizes the essence of the gospel that Jesus preached to the dying world. This is what has been missing in many of our churches today. May God count it towards you all.*

*In addition, my desire is an opportunity to walk into your church one day, when this is over, and personally thank many of you who have been praying for me.*

Thank you and may God bless you all. Cyriacus Akas



**PLEASE  
JOIN US!**

**OUTREACH TEAM  
SPAGHETTI LUNCHEON**

**Sunday, November 1<sup>st</sup>  
Great Hall**  
Following Worship

**Food...Fun...Fellowship**

\$8.00 – Adult  
\$4.00 – Ages 5-12  
(4 and Under – Free)

*This luncheon provides fellowship among our congregation while heightening awareness about our mission program and raising funds for our Rainbow Covenant projects.*

**AVON FUNDRAISER**

In conjunction with our Spaghetti Luncheon, the Outreach Team will sponsor an Avon Fundraiser. Our Avon Representative Lisa Rock has once again generously offered to donate **ALL** her profits from our sales to MPUMC's mission efforts.

**The more we sell...the more we earn!** If you currently order Avon, please consider making your Campaign 23 purchases through our Outreach Team fundraiser. If you are new to Avon products please pick up a book from the mission table in the parlor.

Lisa will be available at our Spaghetti Luncheon to answer questions, distribute samples and take orders.

**SUPPORT MISSIONS!**

**...PLEASE NOTE...**

The deadline to submit articles for the November Newsletter is:

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15<sup>TH</sup>**

**OCTOBER  
WORSHIP ASSISTANTS**

**GREETERS**

- Oct. 4...Dorothy Wiggins and Chante Waters
- Oct. 11... Carolyn McPherson and Mary O'Neal
- Oct. 18...Houston Bethel and Mike Harvey
- Oct. 25...Crystal Hill and April Preyar

**ACOLYTES**

- Oct. 4...Sydney Cerrentano and Denise Parker
- Oct. 11... Christopher Parker and Pierre Parker
- Oct. 18... Kaline Langley and Carinne Parker
- Oct. 25...Marissa Johnson and Will Zopp

**USHERS NEEDED  
For Sunday Morning Worship**

No Experience Necessary!

**Please see Lucious Moore to volunteer.**

**A  
BIG  
THANK YOU**

To everyone who helped in any way, large or small, to make the all-church Fall Flea Market the success that it was. The weather cooperated to give us a perfect day to be out in the parking lot. The vendors who came to share the day with us had a variety of wares to sell. The church tables – gifts, books, jewelry, odds and ends and bakery – all held bargains galore. The food was tasty too. But best of all was the fellowship shared by everyone there.

*Thank you to all – staff, members and friends!*

**IT WAS A GREAT EVENT!**