

# THE COMMUNICATOR

January 2021



## From the Pastor's Keyboard

“2020 Vision”

One year ago, in my January 2020 Communicator front page, I asked each of you, “What is your 2020 Vision?” Playing on the theme of an optometrist’s measure of visual acuity, I asked what your Vision was for 2020; how you will structure your plans for the year around God and God’s presence in your life.

We had no idea at the time what 2020 would bring, or how our entire society would be redefined. However you responded to that question, whatever your vision was for 2020 last January 1, I am sure it was not reflective of the reality that hit us.

But one of the things I pointed out in that article was that 2020 Vision is not “perfect vision” as some are led to believe. 2020 Vision is a measure of acuity; predicting, based on curated data, a person’s ability to clearly receive information from a distance. 2020 Vision could be defined as the ability to clearly assess a situation, react, and adapt accordingly. In this understanding of Visual Acuity, I would say CUCC has measured 2020.

When we saw what was coming, we quickly reacted; closing our entire building, including our preschool ministry program, and adapting to new ways of gathering, worshipping, educating, and serving. When factors in our context permitted safe in-person gathering, we adapted to new safety protocols and worship standards. We learned new ways to practice communion, to give our offering, and to praise God in song. We assessed the situation, reacted, and adapted accordingly.

Then came November, and the factors in our context precluded in person gathering; we once again assessed the situation, reacted, and adapted accordingly. Since December 1 we have been worshipping in yet another new way, with videos and guest speakers from around the Conference. Assess, react, adapt. Thanks to your Church Council Leadership, we have been able to do this with 2020 acuity.

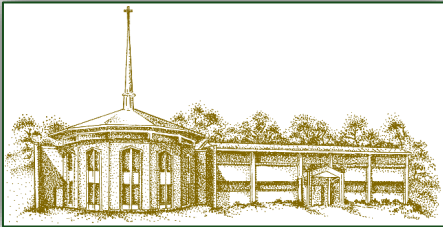
Why is our acuity so high? It is because of the work we have been doing these past five years to define who we are, to discern ministry objectives, and have set benchmarks against which we can measure our achievements. Our five-year plan (which we are almost three years into) has guided us through this time of unforeseeable pandemic. The ministry objectives detailed in that plan have been a guiding star that illumines our objectives, no matter what viruses interfere with the daily workings of the church.

On January 3, we will celebrate Epiphany. We will not be in-person yet, that Sunday is still livestreamed only, but we will be together nonetheless. On that day, we remember the shining star that led the Magi to the Christ Child, and the prophetic message of the Magi who bowed down and worshipped the King. Just as we have been thrown curve balls in 2020, they were thrown curve balls as well. They were distracted by Herod, and who knows what else on their journey. By focusing on their faith, focusing on their ministry objective, and focusing on the star, they were able to assess, react, and adapt; and they measured their achievement by their successful proclamation. This is more than just a story about Wise Men, this is a story about Prophetic Presence; and that Prophetic Presence would not have been possible without a guide.

So what is your acuity? Are you able to see what is coming in your life and assess, react, and adapt? What is your relationship with your faith, with your church? Have you set benchmarks about how your faith will grow in 2021, about how you will be involved in the church in 2021, or are you just going to “wing it?” Without a goal, without benchmarks, without a star, your journey will not be fruitful; you will not arrive at your desired destination. So for 2021, let’s all strive for 2020 Vision; not the year, but the acuity, and set a goal to be even more faithful than before.

-Pastor Rick

**HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE STAFF OF COLUMBIA UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST!  
APRIL ROTHWEILER; ED ROLLINS; AMY CROUSORE; ERIKA MALTSBARGER; RAJ TOLANI; AND PASTOR RICK!**



**COLUMBIA  
UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**  
3201 I-70 DRIVE NW  
COLUMBIA, MO 65202

[Rev. Rick Oberle](#)

Pastor

[Rev. Fred Brandenburg](#)

Pastor Emeritus

[April Rothweiler](#)

Office Administrator

[Ed Rollins](#)

Music Coordinator

[Amy Crousore](#)

Organist/Accompanist

[Erika Maltsbarger](#)

Director, Little One's Day Out

[Raj Tolani](#)

Financial Secretary

**Sunday Worship Schedule**

Sunday School  
Not meeting due to COVID

10:30am- Worship  
Online only

**Office Hours:**  
Monday through Friday  
9 a.m.- 3 p.m.

**Phone:**  
(573)-445-7931

**Email:**  
[office@columbiaucc.com](mailto:office@columbiaucc.com)

**Website:**  
[www.columbiaucc.com](http://www.columbiaucc.com)

**CUCC LIVESTREAMING– NEW EQUIPMENT UPDATE**

Our new livestreaming equipment is here! Two new PTZ (pan, tilt, zoom) cameras and several other components were installed on December 1. The past three weeks have been a steep learning curve for James Melton and Mike Pierson and others as they have learned how to master this technology.

You should have seen an immediate upgrade in sound, picture, and overall quality of our livestream. With the new technology, we are running sound through the new soundboard; so those of you at home can now hear the quality sound we have been experiencing in the Sanctuary for the past few months.

The cameras are controlled from the Technology Booth (formerly the Sound Booth) remotely, to zoom in on worship participants. What was once a one person job in the old Sound Booth has quickly evolved into a three person job; one on sound, one on cameras, and one advancing slides.

If you are interested in learning how to operate this equipment, contact [Mike Pierson](#) or [James Melton](#). They will be scheduling training sessions in late January and early February to expand the pool of volunteers in this area of the service.

**One item of importance–** with this new technology, our livestream is much more sophisticated, but it cannot be streamed to both You Tube (our website) and Facebook at the same time; so from now on, we will only be streaming to You Tube (accessible through our website on Sunday morning) and not Facebook. The service will be uploaded to Facebook later that day.

As always, our worship services do not have to be watched “live” at 10:30 as they are all recorded and accessible on our church website at any time.



**PLEASE HELP US KEEP OUR  
PLAYGROUND SAFE FOR ALL  
CHILDREN BY FOLLOWING THESE  
GUIDELINES:**

- ◆ The CUCC playground is designed for, and should only be used by, children ages 8 and younger.
- ◆ Adult supervision is required while children are on the playground.
- ◆ Mulch must stay on the ground. When children dig up mulch it creates holes that are tripping hazards. Children should only dig in the sandbox.
- ◆ Sand should stay in the sandbox. Please do not allow sand to be carried and dumped in the playhouse or on play structures.
- ◆ Use playground equipment in the manner it is intended.

**UPDATES ON CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

**May 16, 2021–** Annual Congregational Meeting hosted by the Church Council. This will be our first Annual Meeting under our new programming structure! Lunch will be served prior to the meeting. Mark your calendars!

**2021 BUDGET–** The 2021 Budget was approved unanimously at our Budget Meeting on November 8. This Budget calls for a modest 5.2% increase in spending for 2021. If you would like a copy of the 2021 approved budget, contact [April](#) in the church office and she will send you a copy. (Our fiscal year is still the calendar year; it did not change when the By-Laws changed the programming year to an academic schedule. The programming year is now June 1-May 31.)

Address Change:

**Hugo & Donna Wilmsmeyer**  
**5613 Abercorn Dr.**  
**Columbia, MO 65203**

*May your holidays and New Year be filled with  
comfort and joy!* -Lindsay

*Our sincere thanks for your support. Best wishes  
for the holidays!* -Ashlee

*Thankful for you!* - Mimi

*We appreciate your support. Happy Holidays!*  
— Your partners at **Ronald McDonald**  
**House Charities of Mid-Missouri**

## CUCC LUNCH BUNCH

**CUCC Lunch Bunch will meet on Thursday, JANUARY 28**, in the Fellowship Hall at noon with a carry-in meal. This group is open to everyone regardless of age or any other determining factor. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

**Our own April Rothweiler will be speaking for the STOP Human Trafficking Coalition of Central MO. Come learn how human trafficking affects your community and how you can be a part of the solution!**

**All are welcome to join us!** Bring a dish to share, or a sack lunch if you wish. Wear your mask! We will practice social distancing and hygienic serving procedures. Come join the Fun!

## Women's Fellowship Update

Women's Fellowship will gather on **Thursday, January 14, at 9:30 a.m.** in the Gathering Area upstairs.

Our time together begins with a light brunch, supplied by two of the women on a rotational basis. The food is always good! After we eat, we begin our Bible Study. The current study is based on the topic of lamentation throughout the Bible. We use a curriculum titled, "Into the Light, Finding Hope Through Prayers of Lament." After Bible Study and prayer, we have a short business meeting to plan for upcoming activities.

All women of the church are invited to join us— no matter your age or who you are! This is a great time to make new friends, to renew old acquaintances, and to reconnect with God through the scriptures. For more information, contact [Mariann Bullerd](#), [Melba Shaffer](#), or [April Rothweiler](#).

## NEW TRANSPORTATION FUND ESTABLISHED, READY FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

In 2021, the Finance and Stewardship Ministry Team will be working with the Membership & Care Ministry Team and the Church Council to set parameters for our new Transportation Fund, and begin marketing it. We hope to set a "goal" for growth of this fund so we can begin utilizing it to meet transportation challenges in the congregation.

This fund is open to contributions from fellowship groups or individuals through estate planning, recurring gifts, or one-time donations. For this fund to grow, it is up to individual members to make it happen.

We have several church members with transportation challenges, especially our homebound members. This fund could, if it grows, be used to help address these challenges, whether we purchase a vehicle, rent vehicles on occasion, or come up with some other creative option to provide transportation options to care for our members.

The primary purpose of this fund is to accumulate donations that can be used for purchasing or renting transportation, specifically a church van or bus, as well as maintaining and insuring such a vehicle. This fund could also be used for short term rental goals to transport members to and from church or for special church trips or other special projects identified and authorized by the Church Council.

Approval to utilize this fund to purchase vehicles will require specific ministry plans and schedules attached which designate usage, maintenance, and amortization. This means that no purchases can be made from this fund until all details are worked out and listed exhaustively, including the items mentioned above.

For years, some in the congregation have lamented our inability to provide transportation options to our homebound members, youth, fellowship groups, and others. This is your chance to make these dreams a reality! To contribute to this fund, check with [Sue Ann Shaefer](#), [Brent Marcks](#), [George Zimny](#), or another member of the Church Council. We can make this happen if we all work together!

## MODERATOR'S MOMENT

### WHAT ABOUT "THE FATES"?

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! You may receive this communicator article before you begin your family celebrations. If so, may you experience all the joys, reflection, and memories this time has to offer. If you are reading this post-Christmas celebration, my wish is that you are basking in the glow of the season and looking towards what 2021 may bring. Either way, I wish all the best for you and yours.



Despite the many changes we have experienced, I am struck by what has stayed the same. Our spiritual journeys continue. Our work together and mission to help those who struggle continues. We continue to find a way despite all the reasons to sit back and wait for this situation to pass. The last few weeks have been a struggle for me—nothing out of the ordinary compared to most years. Pressures rise as I work quickly to squeeze everything I can out of the remaining days of the year. Everything feels heavy. As I push ahead, checking items off my to-do list, I like to listen to a particular playlist. The song below, on that playlist, seems to add weight to my already sagging shoulders. I feel every bit as resigned as the lyrics, and their exquisite singing suggests.

*Why the struggle, why the strain? Why make trouble? Why make scenes?  
Why go against the grain? Why swim upstream?  
It ain't; It ain't; It ain't no use  
You're bound; You're bound; You're bound to lose  
What's done; What's done; What's done is done  
That's the way the river runs So why get wet? Why break a sweat?  
Why waste your precious breath? Why beat your handsome brow?  
Nothing changes; Nothing changes; Nothing changes anyhow*

Yet even as I listen to the lyrics, I try to reflect on where this song occurs; in the never-ending cycle of the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice as told in the musical "Hades Town."

I had the opportunity to see this show in fall of 2019, and it left a lasting impression. I have always been a sucker for Greek and Roman Mythology, and this updated interpretation is spectacular. This song ([linked here](#)) sung by "The Fates" appears right when it seems there is no way forward, that no matter what is done, the story has no positive outcome. "The Fates" imply that everything is destined to happen and that there is little control over the outcome. In small moments (or even big moments) of despair, it is often true that decisions have been made, conclusions reached, and destinations final. Yet as the story unfolds, new opportunities present themselves for Orpheus and Eurydice . . . will he always turn back and look? For Orpheus, this may be the case, but what can we learn? As we reach the end of the musical, we are enticed to tell the tale yet again . . . to know that it can be different or that other paths are spinning out from every decision made and conclusions reached. The reality is that no destination is final, but rather the start of the next journey.

When hearing the siren-like song by "The Fates," I would propose that the only thing we hear is our doubt, worry, and fear holding us back. Why do some accept and resign themselves to an outcome? Why do some look to promises and opportunities? I don't purport to know all the answers to these questions. We do, though, have the opportunity in 2021 to lean into some advantages. The pandemic is not over. Life's struggles and burdens will not end. Local community injustices, inequities, and imbalances will continue to exist. But do we give up? Do we listen to "The Fates?"

I say no, and I want to challenge us to know when we are sinking in the mire of "The Fates" song that we cling to three ideas from the book "Resilience: The Science of Mastering Life's Changes." Below are only three of the ten practices, but they can help and remind us to push back against fate. We aren't going to solve every problem. We can't make the vaccine arrive any sooner so that we can again worship together in person. We won't end all injustices overnight.

But we can:

**Be Optimistic** (challenging during this difficult time, but balance the positive outlook with a realistic view of the world)  
**Face Our Fears** (when we face our fears, they do become less terrifying, and we are likely helping others along the way)  
**Have a Spiritual or Religious Practice** (if we actively participate in a religious or spiritual community, we strengthen our resolve)

This last one, in particular, is so essential as we look to 2021. Are you taking advantage of all that CUCC has to offer? The more we can connect, whether virtual or in-person, the more we can be part of a safety net. You may be the lifeline that another member or soon to be member needs.

The last line, The Fates sing, "nothing changes anyhow." Those words are far from the truth we are currently living. Everything is changing so often that many (including myself) wonder if we will ever land somewhere safe and predictable. We will, and we will do it together.

I am sending you all so much love. Blessings as we close out 2020. This is a year that many will want to forget, but for me, 2020 represents our fantastic ability to survive and adapt. Through it all, we have become more robust and learned to love more deeply.

Together in Christ, that we may all be one, *James Melton, CUCC*

## LODO MINISTRY TEAM

### TEACHING GRATITUDE TO CHILDREN

Gratitude is when we express appreciation and thanks for the good things in our lives. With so much negativity in this world, it can be difficult to shift our mindset to think of the good. Gratitude is one of the key resilience builders. It allows us to celebrate the present. It dispels negative emotions. Teaching gratitude cultivates a higher sense of self-worth.

In this era of instant gratification, teaching gratitude is SO important. Studies have shown that grateful children tend to be happier, more engaged with hobbies and schoolwork, have better relationships, and report greater satisfaction in general. Instilling gratitude in young children can literally help them grow up to be happier people. How do we teach such an abstract concept?

Gratitude is so much more than the simple act of saying thanks. It requires children to use a set of complex social-emotional skills, including perspective taking and emotional intelligence. Gratitude involves much more than simply learning how to say thanks.

Gratitude has 4 parts:

1. Noticing: What we NOTICE in our lives for which we can be grateful.
2. Thinking: How we THINK about why we have been given those things.
3. Feeling: How we FEEL about the things we have been given.
4. Doing: What we DO to express appreciation in return.

While saying thanks is a way to show gratitude, it is important that children learn all 4 of the components of gratitude. We tend to focus on what we see as we work with children because it is an outward expression. But it's even more important to teach the deeper parts of gratitude by helping children think about the things they are grateful for and recognize the thoughts and feelings tied to what makes them grateful.

### LODO NEWS

The staff and families of Little One's Day Out wish you all a Happy New Year! December was full of Christmas joy as we celebrated the season with Gingerbread, Christmas, and Nativity activities throughout our classrooms. While COVID precautions kept us from having our annual Christmas Program, we continued to celebrate the birth of Jesus through song. This year, we provided parents with a pre-recorded Christmas Performance created with each class from December 14-18. Many thanks to Mike Pierson for editing our videos and making a wonderful finished product! For privacy purposes, the video was made available only to LODO parents via a password protected link.

Students and staff enjoyed a "pajama party" day on Friday, December 18. Everyone loves being cozy at school! LODO is closed for Christmas Break December 23-January 4. We are looking forward to returning from Christmas Break on January 6 and jumping into learning.

#### January Themes:

- ◆ Acts of Kindness
- ◆ Winter/Winter Animals/Hibernation
- ◆ Author Spotlight: Mo Willems
- ◆ Galaxy/Outerspace

Wishes for a wonderful New Year!  
Erika Maltsbarger



## INCLUSION AND AFFIRMATION MINISTRY TEAM

To my Beloved Church Community: Hope, Joy, Peace, Love — may these Christmas blessings fill us as we usher in 2021.

So much has happened this year. So many lives affected in a multitude of ways in 2020. I find the following verse comforting as we venture into a new year; with new vaccines, a new administration, new successes, and, continuing challenges:

***"No need to recall the past, no need to think about what was done before. See, I am doing a new deed, even now it comes to light; can you not see it? Yes, I am making a road in the wilderness, paths in the wilds"***  
Isaiah 43:18-19

God provides the path and encourages us to seek it. Let's encourage, support, and assist each other in seeing God's path for us, as individuals and, as a community of the faithful.

Our Ministry team will meet again in early January. We will plan a celebration of the words and deeds of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. We will also plan the One-Year Anniversary of becoming Open and Affirming. February will be the observance of Black History month. Once we can safely gather again, this Ministry Team will proceed with investigating the need for a PFLAG organization in our area (a support group for parents with children that identify as LGBTQ+), educating ourselves about exclusionary practice in our society, and supporting legislation that allows all God's people to live free of discrimination.

We have also been working with The Oasis UCC on establishing an Open and Affirming Coalition of churches in Mid-Missouri. To that end, we have begun "MONA" which stands for Mid-Missouri Open and Affirming Coalition. We hope to welcome DOC churches as well as UCC Churches into this coalition as we grow. Please check out our MONA Facebook page if you haven't already. It is designed to assist individuals looking for safe ONA churches, as well as supporting other congregations in their ONA journey.

In closing, here is my favorite Irish Blessing. I would sing it for you on You Tube, but trust me . . . no one wants that.

*May the road rise up to meet you.  
May the wind be always at your back.  
May the sun shine warm upon your face.  
May the rain fall soft upon your fields.  
Until we meet again, may God hold you  
In the hollow of both hands.*

Alisa Lau-Sieckman, Inclusion Team Chair



### CUCC OPEN AND AFFIRMING/INCLUSION COVENANT

Columbia United Church of Christ celebrates God's boundless and unconditional love by intentionally welcoming and affirming all God's children.

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey;  
No matter where you are on your faith journey;  
No matter your sexual orientation, gender expression or identity;  
No matter your race, culture, ethnicity, nationality or politics;  
No matter your age, ability, health, relationship status or family structure;  
No matter your social, economic, educational, legal or life circumstances;  
You are welcome here!



Called by Jesus to be an Open and Affirming, inclusive faith community, Columbia United Church of Christ commits to welcoming everyone into the full life of our congregation. Our paths and voices may differ, but we journey in faith together.

## FINANCE AND STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

### GIVING TUESDAY UPDATE

By George Zimny

Giving Tuesday is a grassroots, non-profit campaign the Tuesday after Thanksgiving each year. It is an opportunity to lift up churches and other non-profits serving the community in the midst of the Holiday Season. It is a way to express Thanksgiving for all they are doing and to make Advent more meaningful. It is a day to give back after the excesses of Black Friday and Cyber Monday. This year, the CUCC Finance & Stewardship Ministry Team provided this opportunity to CUCC members and friends; and it was quite a successful campaign!

We set a goal of raising \$20,000 that one day to offset the Joyful Giving shortfall we have experienced this year, and, to practice good Biblical tithing, we agreed to give 10% of whatever we raised away to Voluntary Action Center and another 10% would be allocated to our LODO preschool ministry.

Throughout the weeks prior to Giving Tuesday, and all throughout the day of, members of the Finance & Stewardship Ministry Team shared videos of their passion and purpose here at CUCC and informed members and friends about the ministries we do and why they are important.

Our combined teamwork as a church family was a success! We raised a total of \$23,765 for Giving Tuesday, surpassing our \$20,000 goal! Of that amount, \$2,376 will be credited to our LODO preschool ministry and \$2,376 will go Voluntary Action Center (\$2,000 of it was already sent for their Christmas program). It is staggering to think of all the lives that will be changed because of our good stewardship as a church family.

**YOU DID IT, CUCC!** We are an amazing church family and together we can make great things happen in God's world! Let's keep up the good work right on into 2021!



### CUCC HAS ONLINE GIVING!

You can now give online to Columbia United Church of Christ through our online giving partner, Kindrid!

There are several ways to make a one time or recurring gift through Kindrid:

1. Click on this link (or type into your web browser): <https://www.kindridgiving.com/app/giving/cucc>
2. Access the Kindrid giving site through our CUCC website: [www.columbiaucc.com](http://www.columbiaucc.com) and click on the "Donate to CUCC" button.
3. Text "GIVE" to 573-240-4041 and follow the directions on the text you receive back to set up your one time or recurring gift.

### 2020 YEAR END FINANCIAL UPDATE

By Brent Marcks

The spirit of stewardship is very much alive in this congregation! In a year that has been largely uncertain, one thing that has been certain is the spirit of faithful stewardship in this community. As we entered March, we were already significantly behind in our budgeted Joyful Giving amount. Throughout the year, we closed the gap and we will end the year having met our Joyful Giving budgeted goal for 2020.

As of the writing of this article we have collected \$326,087.24 directly in Joyful Giving plus \$19,332.00 collected on Giving Tuesday that was dedicated to Joyful Giving. This means our Joyful Giving total as of December 27, 2020 is **\$345,419.24**. This is not the final 2020 number, as more income will be received between 12/27 and 12/31 through Kindrid and other avenues. Our Budgeted goal for 2020 was **\$330,223**; so, *we have already exceeded budgeted giving by 5%!*



I want to take this time to thank each member of the congregation for their generosity and for finding new and faithful ways to support the church when most of the year we couldn't place our offerings in the offering plate. I also want to encourage this faithful stewardship to continue into 2021. In 2020, January and February were low giving months, and we spent the year behind because of that. Hopefully in 2021, we won't be playing catch up all year! I am looking forward to 2021 and what it will bring to our congregation.

## TREASURER'S REPORT—*Brent Marcks, Recording Treasurer*

Financial Update				Date	Attendance	Received	Budget
Nov. Income	\$30,464.88	\$23,052.23	\$7,412.65	12/06/20		\$6,919.00	\$11,556.79
YTD Income	\$258,406.48	\$276,616.10	(\$18,209.62)	12/13/20		\$9,295.26	\$11,556.79
Nov. Expenses	\$23,721.92	\$30,098.95	(\$6,377.03)	12/20/20		\$5,356.96	\$11,556.79
YTD Expenses	\$281,508.12	\$302,364.05	(\$20,855.93)	12/27/20		\$46,130.00	\$11,556.79
Surplus/(Deficit)	(\$17,465.23)	(\$19,724.78)	\$2,259.55	<b>Total</b>		\$67,701.22	\$46,227.16
Nov. Attendance	169						

### CUCC SCHOLARSHIP FUND NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

Did you know there is a Scholarship fund at CUCC? The Memorial Education Fund, established in 1972 by Professor H. H. Krusekopf, and contributed to over the years by many others, was redefined in 2019 as “The Columbia United Church of Christ Scholarship Fund.” (The definition of this fund is available on request; copies have been available for the past year on the wooden rack by the Sanctuary doors.) By definition, scholarships awarded from this fund are available to all active members of the congregation who are pursuing an education beyond High School.

There is an application process and qualification criteria. Application forms are available in the church office. All applications are due by April 1, 2021 and will be considered by a team composed by the Vice Moderator, the Nurture and Education Ministry Team Chair, the Finance and Stewardship Ministry Team Chair, and Pastor Rick. Awards from the fund will be disbursed after July 1 for the fall semester.

If you would like to learn more about the application process for the new Scholarship Fund, you can request a copy of the definition, criteria, and application by contacting [April Rothweiler](#), [Pastor Rick](#), [James Melton](#) (Moderator), [Kristy Odneal](#) (Vice-Moderator), or one of the Ministry Team Chairs listed above.

## FELLOWSHIP AND HOSPITALITY MINISTRY TEAM

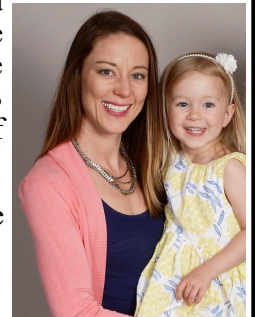
### FELLOWSHIP & HOSPITALITY DURING A PANDEMIC



The Fellowship & Hospitality Ministry Team at Columbia United Church of Christ has been especially challenged this year to bring opportunities for Fellowship & Hospitality in a time when Fellowship is discouraged! No dinners, no parties, no social gatherings of any kind. How do you do Fellowship in this way?

We organized an online Trivia Night for December 5, but we had very few people participate. We hope to reschedule this again soon.

Did you receive your CUCC Christmas Card and ornament? Since we did not have an Advent Banquet this year, we repurposed those funds to provide the ornaments to all congregation members. Thank you to Fellowship & Hospitality Ministry Team members who organized and purchased these ornaments, and to April Rothweiler and her office volunteers who collated the mailing. We sent 195 cards and ornaments to CUCC members and friends. A few were damaged by USPS sorting machines, and we had two returned to the Church Office with mangled envelopes. If you did not receive one, these may be yours! You may request a replacement.



May God be with you this New Year, and may all of the blessings of God's presence be realized in your life.

With love, Stefanie Zimny, Fellowship & Hospitality Chair



# OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY MINISTRY TEAM

## SHARE THE WARMTH

The Voluntary Action Center is not able to hold the Warm Up Columbia drive this year, but there are several local organizations that receive donations of warm winter items — especially coats, hats, gloves, scarves, and socks.

Please consider donating your gently used warm gear to one of the following agencies. VAC recommends you contact them prior to dropping off donations.

- o **Refugee and Immigration Services:** (573) 442-7568
- o **Columbia Public Schools:** 573-214-3111 ext. 33451 (Leslie Thalhuber)
- o **The Wardrobe:** (573) 442-3260
- o **Great Circle:** (573) 874-8686
- o **Coyote Hill:** (573) 874-0179 – Ask for Sarah
- o **Phoenix Programs:** (573) 875-8880 ext. 2204 (Amanda Haynie)
- o **Salvation Army:** (573) 443-2786

## LOAVES AND FISHES UPDATE

The December 21 meal at L&F consisted of spaghetti, salad, and cookies. The salad was provided by Patty Beeson and the cookies were left from what the Men's Fellowship donated last month. Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches were made by Mahree Skala. Servers were Seth Smith and daughters; Lucy and Lillian, Judi Privitt, Anne Heine, and Patty Beeson. We served approximately 118 firsts, seconds, and carry outs. Thanks so much to everyone!!

If there is a group within the church who would want to help out in any way, please let [Audrey Lasley](#) know!

## CUCC ASSISTS COMO HELPS IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF COLUMBIA FAMILIES

The CoMo Helps Fund was created to meet local needs caused by the pandemic. They recently announced a \$50,000 grant to Columbia Public Schools to purchase school supply kits for children. This funding (and the generous online contributions of individuals) allows CPS to make sure all children have the things they need to learn in this difficult new environment. CUCC donated \$5,000 from our 2020 Special Mission Project budget to CoMo Helps.

Other recent grants were awarded to Phoenix House for rent assistance for its outpatient clients and to the Columbia Homeless Outreach Team to provide survival essentials like tents, sleeping bags, etc. to homeless people facing fall and winter outdoors. Thank you for your generosity in supporting these essential needs.

## CROP WALK THANK YOU

The 2020 CROP Walk was a resounding success in spite of the changes made necessary by the pandemic. The Columbia CROP Walk, held on September 20, received \$17,013 in donations, of which \$2,761 was contributed through CUCC.

*That makes us the top contributing organization,* with Broadway Christian Church a close second at \$2,741. Thank you to Jessica Jenks for coordinating this effort, and to all of you for supporting it!

## VAC CHRISTMAS DRIVE—THANK YOU CUCC!

Thanks to the incredible generosity of the CUCC church family, we far exceeded our goal of serving 40 people. By sharing through the VAC drive and Giving Tuesday, you have blessed 66 people with Christmas cheer (a total of \$6,570). The VAC Director expressed deep gratitude on behalf of those who will have a bountiful holiday meal, gifts for their children and for disabled adults, and needed household items. What better way for us to celebrate Jesus' birth than by following his teachings to help the poor?

No act  
of kindness,  
no matter  
how small,  
is ever wasted.

Aesop

## NURTURE AND EDUCATION MINISTRY TEAM

### CONFIRMATION CLASS OF 2021!

The first gathering for our 2021 Confirmation Class was Monday, October 26, at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall (downstairs) with practiced social distancing.

We have six students this year! This class will be confirmed on November 28, 2021 (the first Sunday of Advent). Please keep them in your prayers as they continue on this journey. We will meet on Mondays during the Academic Year at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. For more information, talk to [Pastor Rick](#).

Kindness is a language  
that the deaf can hear  
and the blind can see  
- Mark Twain

### BLUE CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCE

Wednesdays in December, 15 CUCC members and friends gathered to share their stories of grief in the midst of the season of Joy. For some, the Christmas Season is especially hard because of grief. We gathered and shared our stories, walking through the book, A Time to Grieve, by Kenneth C. Haugk.

As we journeyed together we looked at shock, and its role in the grieving process; the pressure to be strong, and the shame felt when we act in unusual ways. We talked about what affects our grief, and how our relationship to the loss affects the impact of the grieving process on our lives. We looked at myths about grief, and how we must not neglect to take care of ourselves, even when grieving.

We realized from this experience was that there is a need for more grief exploration at CUCC. Grief shared is grief made manageable. As we move into 2021, we will be looking for ways to be supportive of each other in times of grief, and explore how grief is a **normal, natural, and necessary** part of all our lives.

### ADULT EDUCATION SERIES– YOUR BIBLE

Have you ever wanted to participate in a basic, beginner's level Bible Study? A "Bible 101" that takes you back to your first steps in Biblical knowledge and reintroduces you to the basics? Have you ever felt that you don't know enough about the Bible to go to a Bible Study class, that before you can study the Bible you need to start at the beginning?

This is what will be offered at CUCC in February and March! [Ann Stone-Meyer](#) will be leading a series for six Sunday mornings called, "Your Bible– the Study Begins." This is a Kerygma series that introduces participants to the Bible on a very beginning level; however, even those with a bit more Biblical knowledge won't find it pandering.

The Series outline is broken up into several units:

- "What is the Bible?"
- "How Did the Bible Come to Be?"
- "What is the Old Testament About?"
- "What is the New Testament About?"
- "How Has the Bible Been Preserved and Handed On?"
- "How Shall We Study the Bible?"
- "What is the Place of the Bible in Our Lives?"



By exploring these topics with Ann and the rest of the class, you can lay the foundation for a much more comprehensive understanding of the Bible. The class will meet Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. in the downstairs Fellowship Hall starting in February.



## Parenting in a Pandemic: Tips to Keep the Calm at Home

Fear, uncertainty, and being holed up at home more to slow the spread of COVID-19 can make it tough for families to keep a sense of calm. But it's important to help children feel safe, keep healthy routines, manage their emotions and behavior, and build resilience.

Here are some tips from the American Academy (AAP) to help your family get through the stress of the pandemic.

- ◆ Address children's fears. Children rely on their parents for safety, both physical and emotional. Reassure your children that you are there for them and that your family will get through this together.
- ◆ Answer questions about the pandemic simply & honestly. Talk with children about any frightening news they hear. It is OK to say people are getting sick, but remind them that following safety steps like hand washing, wearing cloth face coverings, and staying home more will help your family stay healthy.
- ◆ Recognize your child's feelings. Calmly say, for example, "I can see that you are upset because you can't have a sleepover with your friends right now." Guiding questions can help older children and teens work through issues. ("I know it is disappointing not to be able to do some of the things you did before the pandemic. What are some other ways you can have fun with your friends?")
- ◆ Keep in touch with loved ones. Children may also worry about a grandparent who is living alone or a relative or friend with an increased risk of getting COVID-19. When safe, physically distanced visits aren't possible, video chats can help ease their anxiety.
- ◆ Model how to manage feelings. Talk through how you are managing your own feelings. ("I am worried about Grandma since I can't go visit her. I will put a reminder on my phone to call her in the morning and the afternoon until it is safe to see her.")
- ◆ Tell your child before you leave the house for work or essential errands. In a calm and reassuring voice, tell them where you are going, how long you will be gone, when you will return, and that you are taking steps to stay safe.
- ◆ Look forward. Tell them that scientists are working hard to figure out how to help people who get sick, how to prevent it, and that things will get better.
- ◆ Offer extra hugs and say "I love you" more often.

Click below to read the rest of the article that also discusses bedtime, discipline and routines at: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/Parenting-in-a-Pandemic.aspx>

## Looking For a Place to Serve or Give Locally?

The Central Missouri STOP Human Trafficking Coalition (CMSHTC) has been serving the local and surrounding communities for over twelve years; providing assistance to victims, survivors, and their families, in many holistic ways. We want to give a voice to the voiceless and empower the powerless.

**WEAR BLUE**

#WeWearBlueBecause  
#WearBlueDay  
JANUARY 11

**January is National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. January 11 is National Human Trafficking Awareness Day.** To support the stand against Trafficking, *wear blue* and share with others why you believe people aren't property. This is a big way that you can be a part of the solution.

Another way is to give. If you are looking for a worthy organization to give to in 2021, please consider the CMSHTC. CMSHTC is a non-profit organization that uses 90% of their donated funds to serve victims and survivors of trafficking. The other 10% helps cover administrative costs and fees. You can help the Coalition meet their financial needs in 2021; ensuring shelter, health and mental health services for individuals who have faced the reality of the modern day slave trade, food, transportation, and much more. You can give [here](#). Thank you for considering giving to help fight Human Trafficking!



## MEMBERSHIP AND CARE MINISTRY TEAM

### TOGETHER WHILE APART

The Membership & Care Ministry Team has been focused on calling church members during this time of social isolation; offering a friendly voice and words of comfort and encouragement. If you would like a phone call or know a church member who would like a call, please let us know!

If you know someone who has been joining us for on-line worship and would like to be contacted by Pastor Rick or receive more information about our church, please let [Jessica Lucas](#) or [Pastor Rick](#) know! We've reached many people through online worship, and we'd love to connect with them in additional ways.

Although we worshipped apart this Christmas Eve, we were together in spirit. Snap a pic you took of yourself or your family enjoying your coloring sheets or Cookie Communion and email the pictures to [Lena Muench](#), [Stefanie Zimny](#), or the [church office](#) to be shared on our social media pages.

-Jessica Lucas, Ministry Team Chair



## WORSHIP AND MUSIC MINISTRY TEAM

### MAKING MUSIC IN 2020

What a year! While 2020 has come with many challenges, CUCC has done amazing work to ensure that the mission of the church; to serve and worship, has continued and never waned. 2020 was a year of creative approaches to ministry through Zoom and live-streaming, forward thinking by church leadership, and the continued day-to-day work of service with a different look.

That service and ministry has continued in creative and positive ways and is a testament to CUCC's Pastor, leadership, and members. COVID-19 and its challenges are real, but CUCC has worked to remain vigilant in service.

Like the rest of 2020, everything started out well. Music in worship was operating as usual under the leadership of Kristin Veteto. Even when all things shut down in March, Kristin organized a terrific approach to keeping music in worship engaging and fresh. In the summer of 2020, Kristin announced her resignation and the search for a new Music Coordinator began. I was fortunate enough to be called to join the ministry team at CUCC and I am grateful for the chance to be a part of this wonderful congregation.

Thirty-five years of ministry experience never prepared me for service during a time of pandemic. Like everyone in ministry, business, education, etc., we have had to learn to adapt together. Sure, working with bell choirs and vocal choirs and soloists and kids in person would have been terrific, but we have learned to go forward in new ways.

CUCC music ministry has been defined this year by a host of volunteers willing to step in and make music to honor and praise God. We are grateful to all who have shared their talents and looked for ways to make a new song. Special thanks to Amy Crousore for her keyboard skills and her dedication to God's work through music. We are blessed to have her serving at CUCC.

The new year, 2021, will start out much like 2020 ended, but we are hopeful to someday be back rehearsing, singing, ringing, playing, and worshipping together. Until that time, thank you for your support and for all who continue to work for God and CUCC in new and different ways.

-Ed Rollins



## YOU CAN HELP SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT CUCC VIRTUAL WORSHIP

Most of you know that your CUCC worship service is live-streamed each Sunday, but here are a few ways that you can more fully appreciate that worship service and share it with others in the community! With your help, we can spread God’s Word exponentially!

- **Watch it later!** Even though the CUCC Worship Service is livestreamed each Sunday, you don’t have to watch it live! You can come back and watch it at other times, or watch it again if you want to recall something that was said. Past livestreamed services are all on the [CUCC Website](#) and on [Facebook](#).
- **You can host a “Watch Party!”** Select a worship service from Facebook and set up a “Watch Party.” Invite several of your Facebook friends to watch it along with you at a time of your choosing. You can all comment together about elements of the service (just remember, the comments are public).
- **You can “share” the worship service on your Facebook page!** If you “share” it on your page, all of your friends will see it, too. If everyone in our church family would do this, our ministry reach would increase exponentially.

In this time of Coronavirus and social isolation, there are many ways to stay connected with CUCC, and there are also many ways to share CUCC with your friends through social media. Spread the Good News!

## SUNDAY VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY

Below is the Sunday Volunteer Schedule for January. As you can see, we are in need of some spots to be filled and other spots to be shared with new faces. Part of being in the church family is often expressed by sharing the roles that make all of our members and guests feel welcome. If you can fill the needed role or a role in the future, please let one of the leaders know. We appreciate you, and we’re glad you have chosen CUCC as your church!

Date	Greeters	Ushers	Worship Leaders	Acolyte	Tech Booth	Hospitality
01/03	NEED	N/A	Lauren Helmreich	NEED	NEED	N/A
01/10	Carol Duermeyer	N/A	Pat Forward	NEED	NEED	N/A
01/17	Helen Schultz	N/A	Judi Privitt	NEED	NEED	N/A
01/24	Jessica Lucas	N/A	Seth Smith	Lil Smith	NEED	N/A
01/31	Audrey Lasley	N/A	Mahree Skala	NEED	NEED	N/A

## CORONAVIRUS AND CUCC UPDATE

Your leadership team at CUCC continues to monitor the Coronavirus numbers in Boone County. To make our determinations, we look at the Boone County COVID-19 Information Hub, focusing on the 5-day average of new cases. In October, the 5-day average was only 39 cases/day, but in early November, it shot up to 168 new cases/day, which prompted our decision to close the Sanctuary to in-person worship starting November 15.

Since then, the numbers have steadily declined, although they have not gone back to our October levels. As of December 28, our 5-day average of new cases has dropped to 82 new cases/day. This is certainly better than it was on November 8 when our numbers peaked, but it is still not where we would like it to be.

With the distribution of vaccines and the hope that most citizens will be vaccinated, we expect numbers to decrease in the weeks to come. We will be watching to see when we might be able to resume in-person worship again, although for a time we will still have to continue practicing safe distancing and social precautions.

As of right now, our Sanctuary is closed to in-person worship thru January 3. Our COVID response team will be meeting on January 4 to make a determination if a few more weeks are warranted, or if we can slowly begin a phased in return to worship, as we did last May. The congregation will be emailed with our next steps as soon as they are determined.

## CUCC IS WORKING IN BANGLADESH

Climate change is a major concern for Bangladesh due to extreme and regular cyclones, tidal flooding, and riverbank erosion, among other factors. The amount of saline in the soil and groundwater affects agricultural activities and creates a safe drinking water crisis. The Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh trains farmers in innovative climate adaptation practices through Community Centers, which are operated by local residents. One focus for the centers is safe drinking water. Community Centers provide capacity-building courses and provides funds to implement projects including climate change risk assessments for households, climate resilient agriculture, and livelihood opportunities, and installing technology to increase access to fresh water. Through these adaptive techniques, the CCDB is working on long-term solutions toward climate resilient communities in Bangladesh.

The CCDB is a Global Missions Partner of Columbia United Church of Christ through Global Ministries, our shared mission agency with the Christian Church/Disciples of Christ. Global Ministries provides foundational support for this organization and support for their ongoing efforts. Please keep Global Ministries and PCC in your prayers!

**In January, please keep these UCC/DOC Global Ministries missionaries in your prayers:**

**January 3-9**  
**Thomas Smith**  
**Working in Korea**

**January 10-16**  
**Debbie Colvin**  
**Working in Ghana**

**January 17-23**  
**Ricardo Mayol**  
**Working in Guatemala**

**January 24-30**  
**Maria Bakalian**  
**Working in Lebanon**



## CUCC IS WORKING IN MEXICO

*(condensed from [www.globalministries.org](http://www.globalministries.org))*


The [Roundtable of Mexican Partner Churches](#) (a [Global Ministries](#) Mission Partner) is made up of three denominations within Mexico. It is focused on the training of lay and clergy leaders for the growing number of congregations.

One of the Roundtables educational programs is the Summer Bible and Theology program. The Roundtable describes this program as *an experience of unity in the midst of diversity*. Drawing participants from across these three denominations, this program prides itself on creating a space for excellent biblical and theological education that is accessible to all. One goal of the program is to make continuing education for both laity and clergy a norm for those in the member denominations. Subjects include Biblical interpretation, pastoral care, and theology. The Roundtable is in the process of developing a diploma program in coordination with the Education Department from the Theological Community in Mexico.

The 2019 program was a witness to the important presence of young people in churches, not only as participants, but also as program facilitators and learners. The development of youth leadership is another top priority of the Roundtable. The summer program has evolved from predominantly adult participants to more youth and young adult participants.

The Roundtable is energized to continue educating clergy and lay members across Mexico and to build upon their growing youth participation. Since the spring of 2020 and the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Roundtable has adapted and is providing virtual education and educational resources now. The summer educational program for 2020 was postponed, but the Roundtable continues to plan for the future and hopes to continue offering its flexible virtual offerings even after it returns to offering an in-person format.

## ON THE CHURCH CALENDAR IN JANUARY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>3</b> <b>10:30am Worship</b> <i>Worship Livestreaming on our <a href="#">CUCC Website</a></i> Bring 3 Gifts in recognition of the Wise Men	<b>4</b> 10:15am Staff Meeting 5pm Outreach & Advocacy Ministry Team 6pm Confirmation	<b>5</b> LODO Returns CPS back in session 6:30pm Nurture & Education Ministry Team	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 6:30pm Inclusion & Affirmation Ministry Team	<b>8</b> 	<b>2</b> 1 HAPPY NEW YEAR OFFICE CLOSED
<b>10</b> <b>10:30am Worship</b> <i>Worship Livestreaming on our <a href="#">CUCC Website</a></i>	<b>11</b> 10:15am Staff Meeting 6pm Confirmation	<b>12</b> 5:30pm Music & Worship Ministry Team 6:30pm Finance & Stewardship Ministry Team	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 9:30am Women's Fellowship	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> <b>10:30am Worship</b> <i>Worship Livestreaming on our <a href="#">CUCC Website</a></i>	<b>18</b> 10:15am Staff Meeting 6pm Confirmation	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> COMMUNICATOR ARTICLES DUE	<b>21</b> 5:30pm LODO Ministry Team	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> <b>10:30am Worship</b> <i>Worship Livestreaming on our <a href="#">CUCC Website</a></i>	<b>25</b> 10:15am Staff Meeting 6pm Confirmation	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 12pm Lunch Bunch 6:30pm Membership & Care Ministry Team	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>

# THE COMMUNICATOR

Columbia United Church of Christ  
An Open and Affirming Congregation- ONA #1575  
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## ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

*The Communicator* is a publication of Columbia United Church of Christ. The stated purpose is to communicate with the congregation and our friends concerning the organizations and events of the church. It is published once each month. The deadline for articles is the 20th of each month.



### Interested in Church Membership?

If you are interested in joining, please contact [Rev. Rick Oberle](mailto:rick@columbiaucc.com).  
rick@columbiaucc.com

**Become  
Part of  
Our  
Church  
Family**

### Columbia United Church of Christ Open and Affirming/Inclusion Covenant

Columbia United Church of Christ celebrates God's boundless and unconditional love by intentionally welcoming and affirming all God's children.

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey;  
No matter where you are on your faith journey;  
No matter your sexual orientation, gender expression or identity;  
No matter your race, culture, ethnicity, nationality or politics;  
No matter your age, ability, health, relationship status or family structure;  
No matter your social, economic, educational, legal or life circumstances;  
You are welcome here!

Called by Jesus to be an Open and Affirming, inclusive faith community, Columbia United Church of Christ commits to welcoming everyone into the full life of our congregation. Our paths and voices may differ, but we journey in faith together.

### LODO PLAYGROUND RESPECT

Please help us keep our playground safe for all children by following these guidelines:

- ◆ The CUCC playground is designed for, and should be used by, *only children ages 8 and younger*.
- ◆ Adult supervision is required while children are on the playground.
- ◆ Mulch must stay on the ground. When children dig up mulch it creates holes that are tripping hazards. Children should only dig in the sandbox.
- ◆ Sand should stay in the sandbox. Please do not allow sand to be carried and dumped in the playhouse or on play structures.
- ◆ Use playground equipment in the manner it is intended.