

# The Communicator

May 2025

## *From the Pastor's Keyboard . . .*

*"The Church in Action"*

What are we to do now? This was the thought of the first century disciples as they lived into the call of Christ. After the Resurrection, Jesus spent some time with his disciples (church traditions tell us it was forty days) affirming them in their mission and empowering them to do the work he began. He continued to teach them his ways, and he fed them many times. Most of Jesus' teachings, especially during this post-Resurrection time, happened around food.

The four narratives we call "Gospels" are fine books about Jesus' life; but there is so much more to the story arc of the New Testament beyond what we hear in the Gospels. There are 23 more narratives that follow, and all of them are about how the church is going to be the church once Jesus is gone. All 23 books ask the question, "what are we to do now?"

The book that immediately follows the Gospels is the Book of Acts. This book is the "hinge" of the New Testament, making the transition from stories about Jesus' life and teachings (Gospels) to stories about how the church is going to live into those teachings and carry the Word of God into the rest of the world. Acts is a fast-moving book, taking us from the Upper Room with Jesus to an imprisoned Paul in Rome.

The book we call "Acts" is technically titled, "The Acts (actions) of the Apostles" and lives into that name. It is all about the actions of the Apostles post-Jesus. After Jesus ascends (Acts 1) and Matthias is chosen to replace Judas, we find ourselves in Jerusalem during the Pentecost holiday (Acts 2). The Jewish Pentecost holiday, also called, "Shavuot," is fifty days after Passover. It marks the day that the Jewish people believe that Moses ascended Mt. Sinai to receive the commandments from God.

These commandments were considered to be God's greatest gift to the Hebrew people; so, it is only fitting that it was on this day that they received another great gift; the gift of the Holy Spirit. As the disciples were celebrating Pentecost (Shavuot), God's gift is poured out on them. They are empowered and inspired and begin sharing that gift with the rest of Jerusalem.

The rest of the Book of Action is about the actions that happen because of the Holy Spirit. Peter, John, and Stephen begin boldly proclaiming God's Word. Stephen is stoned to death because of this, while Ananias and Sapphira die of selfish greed. Paul is healed of his sinful ways by an apparition of Jesus, and Annanias is sent to minister to him. Phillip shares the Good News with an Ethiopian eunuch, and baptizes them into the faith; making the first Gentile Christian in history a gender non-conforming individual.

Chapters 10-11 are very exciting as Peter is sent by God to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with the Roman Centurion Cornelius. Cornelius is overcome by the Holy Spirit, working through Peter, and his whole household is baptized into the new Christian faith. On that day, several thousand Gentiles are added into this new Jewish movement, the followers of Jesus Christ.

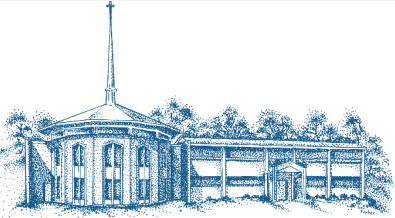
The Book of Action records the early history of relations between the church and the oppressive expressions of the Roman Empire. Since the beginning of the church, the church has always been political; speaking out against the tyranny of oppression. The political actions of the apostles have continued in every day and age and continue to this day, as people of faith assemble for "50501" and "Hands off" protests today. God's Holy Spirit continues to empower God's people to work for positive change in God's world.

We will be studying the Book of Acts here at CUCC during a special daytime Bible Study. Tuesdays, May 6, 13, 20 & 27, we will gather at 12:30 p.m. to discuss chapters of Acts for an hour. You are welcome to bring your lunch! We will go wherever the conversation leads us. I hope to see you here for Bible Study; and keep that Holy Spirit burning in your hearts as you ask yourself, "What are we to do now?"

**-Pastor Rick**







# News & Updates

## Columbia United Church of Christ

3201 I-70 Drive NW  
Columbia, MO 65202

Rev. Rick Oberle  
Pastor

Rev. Fred Brandenburg  
Pastor Emeritus

Shelly Adams  
Student Pastor

Casey Wood  
Music Coordinator

Steven Jannetti  
Organist/Accompanist

Alexandra Roper  
Office Administrator

Erika Maltsbarger  
Director, Little One's Day Out

Caleb Berry  
Custodian

### Sunday Schedule:

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation  
10:00 a.m. Fellowship Time  
10:30 a.m. Worship

### 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)



### CHURCH WORLD SERVICE BLANKET SUNDAY

Imagine it's a cold winter night. A family has just survived a devastating storm, and they've lost everything. They have no home, no heat, no extra clothes. All they have is each other. What would they need most in that moment? Warmth. Comfort. Hope. Jesus teaches us in Mark 12:31, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Our neighbors are not just the people we know, but anyone in need - whether they're across the street or across the world.

Church World Service Blanket Sunday is an opportunity to provide some comfort in these times of vulnerability. We can help with just \$10, you can provide a warm CWS Blanket to someone who desperately needs it. For \$25, you can give a blanket and a hygiene kit to help someone start fresh. And for \$60, you can provide an entire family bundle of blankets and kits, bringing comfort and care to a whole household. We will receive this offering on Mother's Day, May 11. One blanket, one family, one life at a time; being the hands and feet of Christ to share love, warmth, and hope.

### THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HELPED WITH CLEAN UP COLUMBIA!

We picked up 49 bags of trash along I-70 Drive NW on Saturday, April 12. The roadside sure looks better! Thank you to Sue Ann Schaefer for providing snacks. We had a combination of 9 church members, 12 Scouts, and 6 of their parents/leaders for a total of 27 helpers. The members were: Cindy Deegan, JoEllen Grace, Tim Grace, Anne Heine, Connie Loveless, Mahree Skala, Karl Skala, Ginny VanHove, and Llona Weiss. Scout leaders and parents who helped were: Sharon Austin, Larry Babcock, Nancy Capps, Julie Ladehoff, Louisa Paneck, and Evan Redburn. The participating Scouts were: Bryce Austin, Grayson Briggs, Lauren Capps, Amelie Clark, Alexander Hahn, Bethany Hahn, Benjamin Jeffries, Reuben Ladehoff, Sammie Paneck, Logan Babcock, Louisa Paneck, and Olivia Redburn.

Many of the Scouts were working toward their Conservation badge. It was wonderful to have so many young, strong and enthusiastic participants this year!



# Sunday Volunteer Schedule for May

Date	Greeter	Usher	Worship Leader	Tech Booth
05/04	Pat Forward	Keith Birkes Deborah Long Birkes	Lena Muench	Lorry Dreier Brent Marcks
05/11	Donna Marsh	Corinne Remika Joe Remika	Lindsey Oberle	Josh Muench Ted Dachroeden
05/18	Carol Duermeyer	Llona Weiss Pat Forward	Audrey Lasley	Doug Privitt Judi Privitt
05/25	Susan Dunham	Mary Lorber	Llona Weiss	Carissa Graves John Graves

## May Birthdays

Paul Klick - 05/01	Brenda Muench - 05/03	Christine Staelens - 05/03
Payton Bach - 05/04	James Melton - 05/05	Tim Staelens - 05/05
Betsy Murphy - 05/08	David Fischer - 05/10	Harper Furney - 05/10
Keith Birkes - 05/13	Asher Nieman - 05/13	Alexandra Roper - 05/14
Anne Heine - 05/15	Virginia Zumwalt - 05/17	Marcella Dolezal - 05/18
Kennedy Lucas - 05/19	Mari Ann Keithahn - 05/20	Hayley Dennis - 05/21
Abe Heine - 05/21	Tracy Bach - 05/24	Steve Jannetti - 05/24
Debbie Meers - 05/26	Louis Nieman - 05/26	Roberta Settergren - 05/26
Emmalee Heine - 05/28	River Minor - 05/28	Grayson Oberle - 05/28
Elaina Beckmann - 05/29	Morgan Lavelly 05/31	





# Columbia UCC Council Minutes

The meeting was called to order on March 18, 2025 at 6:37 p.m. by Kurt Heine. Pastor Rick opened with a prayer. Present: Kurt Heine, Deb Birkes, Christine Staelens, Mary Lorber-Solt, Shelly Adams, Lena Muench, Tricia Price, Kristin Veteto, Judi Privitt, Mark Duncan, Rick Oberle, and Alethea Tennill. Tricia Price made a motion to approve the agenda with a second from Mary Lorber Solt. The motion passed. Mark Duncan made a motion to approve the February minutes with a second from Shelly Adams. Motion passed. Rick Oberle discussed Chapter 9 on worship, saying it's "all the hoopla is not good if you aren't authentic." Be authentic and tell the truth. The author found that it is extremely powerful for lay people to pray over the offering.

## **Unfinished Business:**

- ⊗ New light for the sign at the front of church. No new information.
- ⊗ Nominating Committee 2025: Jerry Kiesling and committee is working on nominations for the new year.
- ⊗ Annual Congregational Meeting: scheduled on May 18, 2025 after church service.
- ⊗ Thanking the congregation: Shelly Adams has the list and will divide them up among the council members and put them in their mailbox to be signed with a personal comment from the Council Members.
- ⊗ Eric Moeller Concert will happen at the church on April 4.
- ⊗ Western Association Spring Meeting will be April 5.

## **New Business:**

- ⊗ Recommendation from personnel committee to hire Sara Koenig for the position of Erika Maltsbarger, who is resigning at the end of the school year. Motion passed.
- ⊗ Worship and Ministry Team Updates: Jedd Schneider has resigned from the Worship Team due to personal reasons. Judi Privitt made a motion to accept his resignation with a second from Christine Staelens. Motion passed. There was a nomination from the committee for Edie Diel to finish Jedd Schneider's unexpired term. Motion passed. A recommendation from Worship and Music Team for the Music Coordinator job description and for the Organist/Accompanist job description was proposed and both were passed.
- ⊗ Summer Worship: starts May 25 at 9:30 a.m. Judi Privitt made a motion to adopt the summer worship schedule from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day. Second from Tricia Price. Motion passed.
- ⊗ Pastor's Report: Pastor's Report is attached. Rick thanked everyone for all the prayers and support. The young adult get-together was very successful.
- ⊗ Financials were presented.

## **Ministry Reports:**

- ⊗ Building & Grounds: n/a
- ⊗ Fellowship & Hospitality: served 116 plates at Fasnacht celebration. The Loehnig family band played from 5:30-6:30 p.m. The ministry team spent approximately \$800 on food and music. \$900 was collected in the grey bowls.
- ⊗ Finance & Stewardship: the church can purchase QuickBooks, DocuSign, and Norton from Tech Soup, which will save the church some money. The finance committee looked over the job description for treasurer and recording treasurer. Shelly Adams is interested in donating her husband's car to the church to sell; the money from the car would go in the endowment fund.
- ⊗ Inclusion & Affirmation:
- ⊗ LODO: see above
- ⊗ Membership & Care: April 6 is Bring a Friend To Church Sunday.
- ⊗ Nurture & Education: the Easter balloons will be latex instead of mylar.
- ⊗ Outreach & Advocacy: in April our church will become an official Partner in Education with Alpha Hart school. Food Bank offering for OGHS on April 6.
- ⊗ Worship & Music: see above.

Pastor Rick closed us in prayer. Motion to adjourn by Judi Privitt, second by Christine Staelens. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.



# Finance & Stewardship Ministry Team

## Financial Update

	Actual	Budget	Over/(Under)
March Income	\$25,458.98	\$35,087.00	(-\$9,628.02)
March Expenses	\$32,920.79	\$36,267.00	(-\$3,346.21)
YTD Income	\$63,045.24	\$129,250.00	(-\$66,204.76)
YTD Expenses	\$105,114.23	\$106,642.00	(-\$1,527.77)
Surplus/(Deficit)	(-\$42,068.99)	\$22,608.00	(-\$64,676.99)
March Joyful Giving	\$23,895.98	\$34,021.00	(-\$10,125.02)
YTD Joyful Giving	\$61,432.24	\$124,051.00	(-\$62,618.76)

## Worship Attendance

03/02	98
03/09	82
03/16	102
03/23	73
03/30	83

### THREE WAYS TO GIVE ONLINE TO CUCC

1. Click on this link (or type into your web browser): <https://www.kindridgiving.com/app/giving/cucc>
2. Visit 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 prompts to set up your one time or recurring gift.

### COLUMBIA UCC CHURCH COUNCIL

<b>Moderator:</b>	Kurt Heine	<a href="mailto:heinekurt@gmail.com">heinekurt@gmail.com</a>
<b>Vice Moderator:</b>	Jerry Kiesling	<a href="mailto:rollzierp50@gmail.com">rollzierp50@gmail.com</a>
<b>Secretary:</b>	Alethea Tennill	<a href="mailto:atennill108@gmail.com">atennill108@gmail.com</a>
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Deborah Long Birkes	<a href="mailto:dlong@elon.edu">dlong@elon.edu</a>
<b>Recording Treasurer:</b>	Christine Staelens	<a href="mailto:tigersfour@gmail.com">tigersfour@gmail.com</a>
<b>Building &amp; Grounds:</b>	Ted Dachroeden	<a href="mailto:gpadoc4gd@gmail.com">gpadoc4gd@gmail.com</a>
<b>Fellowship &amp; Hospitality:</b>	Mary Lorber-Solt	<a href="mailto:eldercow@gmail.com">eldercow@gmail.com</a>
<b>Finance &amp; Stewardship:</b>	Shelly Adams	<a href="mailto:shellyraeadams@gmail.com">shellyraeadams@gmail.com</a>
<b>Inclusion &amp; Affirmation:</b>	Tricia Price	<a href="mailto:tricialprice@gmail.com">tricialprice@gmail.com</a>
<b>Little One's Day Out:</b>	Kristin Veteto	<a href="mailto:kristinnoelveteto@gmail.com">kristinnoelveteto@gmail.com</a>
<b>Membership &amp; Care:</b>	Judi Privitt	<a href="mailto:judiprivitt811@gmail.com">judiprivitt811@gmail.com</a>
<b>Nurture &amp; Education:</b>	Lena Muench	<a href="mailto:cfg323@yahoo.com">cfg323@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Outreach &amp; Advocacy:</b>	Mark Duncan	<a href="mailto:markduncan2@mchsi.com">markduncan2@mchsi.com</a>
<b>Worship &amp; Music:</b>	Edie Diel	<a href="mailto:edie@thedandegroup.com">edie@thedandegroup.com</a>
<b>Pastor:</b>	Rev. Rick Oberle	<a href="mailto:rick@columbiaucc.com">rick@columbiaucc.com</a>



# Inclusion and Affirmation Ministry Team

## Mental Health Awareness Month

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Many may think that this month is only important for those who are diagnosed with mental health disorders like depression or anxiety; but the reality is that everyone has mental health needs. Throughout the stages of life, our mental health changes alongside our environments.

For children and teens, having supportive families, communities, and resources can help youth build strong foundations for lifelong well-being. Start the conversation of mental health early; talking about how to understand and express feelings and thoughts can lead to youth being more comfortable with themselves. We must teach children healthy coping skills. Healthy coping skills, such as emotion-focused strategies (i.e. meditating or breathing exercises), problem-focused strategies (i.e. establishing boundaries or working on time management), meaning making (i.e. reframing negative thoughts or journaling), social support (i.e. connecting with trusted friends), and religious coping (i.e. practicing faith traditions), can make tough emotions and situations more manageable.

As adults, it is just as important to keep an eye on our own mental health. Mental health disorders can appear at any time in our lives. This can come with age and biological clock shifts, general life changes, or due to traumatic experiences- past or present. Some groups of adults are more at risk for such mental health challenges. For elderly people, the decline of physical health and cognitive health can severely harm their mental state. Many older adults will experience dementia; 6.9 million Americans aged 65 and older alone are living with Alzheimer's according to a 2022 study. Your brain not working like it used to can cause stress on top of the memory loss- it can be frustrating. Having patience with yourself or loved ones and practicing coping mechanisms when dealing with things like this can help our self esteem and mental health.

For pregnant and postpartum people, the physical changes of the body can dramatically effect their mental health. Stress about finances and medical bills, the physical changes of the body, and the depression and other emotions of postpartum are just a few of the things that can take a toll on a person. It is important that new parents take the time to break down what they are experiencing and use the aforementioned coping skills to help them along. It is common to feel overwhelmed, tired, inadequate, and scared. Just because these feelings are "common" does not mean you have to struggle through them alone. There are many support groups for pregnant and postpartum parents that focus on coping with the physical and mental changes of becoming a parent. These groups are even more critical for those who are of racial or ethnic minorities.

For those who are people of color, different ethnicities, queer sexualities or gender identities, or differently abled bodies face more mental health issues than others. In the FBI's 2023 release on hate crime statistics, there were 13,829 offenses, over half of those were based on race or ethnicity. Data from the U.S. Transgender Population Health Survey reveals that 42% of transgender adults have attempted suicide and 81% have had suicidal thoughts. A 2022 study from the Urban Institute showed that four in ten adults with disabilities experience unfair treatment in health care settings, at work, or when applying for public benefits. This is also to note that these numbers are only from *reported* incidents as many incidents go unreported. Discrimination has been proven time and time again to take a toll on mental and even physical health. This makes combatting general mental health issues even harder. Learning to celebrate our differences can help increase the mental health of everyone. Mental health care providers are encouraged to consider the cultural nuances and needs of the diverse communities they serve. Addressing and reducing barriers to treatment can help build more equitable health care systems.

When it comes to mental health, we must support not just ourselves, but each other. Through using healthy coping skills in our daily lives, we learn to internalize the process of caring for ourselves. When we do this, it becomes easier to care for others and their mental health as well.





# LODO Ministry Team

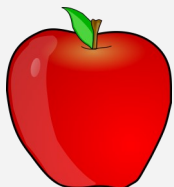
**“School’s out for summer! But remember, learning never stops. Explore, discover, and keep your curiosity alive!” ~ Author Unknown**

This school year has held many blessings and we have loved watching our students grow! As we wrap up our school year later this month, we want to encourage the education to continue into the summer for LODO and CUCC children. Below are some free, fun activities you can do with your children at home. Our goal is to build inquisitive minds and independent thinkers!

April brought Spring fun to LODO with Literacy Night and Easter Celebrations. Families attended Literacy Night on Thursday April 10. Stations included activities to encourage reading and connection with children, building rhyming and syllable skills, recognizing letters and names by incorporating STEM, art, and gross motor, and building pre-writing skills using play. LODO celebrated Easter with students on Monday April 14 and Tuesday April 15. Each class participated in an egg hunt on the playground. Little did the students know that they were learning many skills during this activity. Students practiced color recognition, counting, sharing, and patience. They also built motor skills working to pick up eggs while also keeping eggs in their basket. Every activity teaches children important developmental skills!

## LODO Staff Appreciation Week

Our LODO Parent Committee is busy making plans to celebrate our staff May 5-May 9. If you would like to support the LODO staff and ministry, please consider a donation to the LODO Designated Fund or purchase an item from our Amazon Wish List.



[https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3135KEL32FTBN?ref=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3135KEL32FTBN?ref=wl_share)

## FREE ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS

PLAY HIDE-AND-SEEK  
GO TO THE PARK  
PLANT SEEDS FROM FOOD  
MAKE A COLLAGE  
BUILD A FORT  
DO A SCAVENGER HUNT  
COOK OR BAKE FOOD  
MAKE A RECYCLED CRAFT  
HAVE A PICNIC  
PLAY DUCK, DUCK, GOOSE  
VOLUNTEER

MAKE AN OBSTACLE COURSE  
READ A BOOK  
HAVE A DANCE PARTY  
PLAY CATCH  
HAVE A MOVIE NIGHT  
CATCH BUGS  
MAKE A PAPER AIRPLANE  
COLLECT LEAVES  
WATCH CLOUDS OR STARS  
PLAY PRETEND  
DO YOGA

SING SONGS TOGETHER  
GO FOR A WALK  
PRESS FLOWERS  
PLAY I SPY  
DRAW OR COLOR  
PLAY 20 QUESTIONS  
MAKE A TREASURE MAP  
GO TO THE LIBRARY  
MAKE A NATURE CRAFT  
MAKE SHADOW PUPPETS  
ACT OUT A SHOW

## Upcoming Events

Friday May 2 - LODO Family Spring Picnic (Off-Site)  
Tuesday May 6 & Wednesday May 7 - KidSight Vision Screenings  
Tuesday May 13 at 6:30 p.m. - Pre-K Graduation (Sanctuary)  
Friday May 16 - Last Day of 2024-2025 School Year



## 2025-2026 Enrollment

**August 25, 2025-May 15, 2026**

Lightning Bugs Class: 1 year old before 8/1/25  
(Only available 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.)

Lambs Class: 2 years old before 8/1/25

Lions/Leopards Class: 3 years old before 8/1/25

Leap Frogs/Leopards Class: 4 years old before 8/1/25

Additional information about the LODO Program in available at [www.columbiaucc.com/lodohome](http://www.columbiaucc.com/lodohome).

\*Our Leopards Classroom will be assigned and utilized as either a 3-4's class or 3,4,5's class.

Contact us for information, openings, to schedule a tour, or to enroll!

[LittleOnesDayOut@yahoo.com](mailto:LittleOnesDayOut@yahoo.com)  
573-445-2661

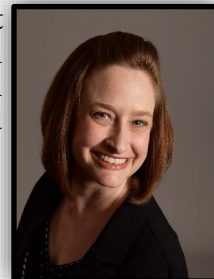
# LODO Ministry Team

*"How lucky am I to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard." -A.A. Milne*

I am so grateful for my 17 years at LODO as a parent, teacher, and director. I will always cherish the relationships built with families, staff, and members of the congregation during my time at CUCC. LODO/CUCC makes a difference in people's lives and I am proud to have been part of the church and preschool ministry. I cannot wait to watch this important work continue in the community. Thank you for always making me feel like a valuable part of the church family. I am so thankful for the countless opportunities to grow both professionally and personally. My last day will be May 30 to allow time to continue Sara's training and allow for a smooth transition in leadership.

I am confident that LODO will flourish with Sara's leadership and the continued support of the CUCC congregation.

In Love and Laughter,  
Erika Maltsbarger,  
LODO Director



Hello! I am beyond excited to serve the CUCC/LODO community as the new Program Director! With over 10 years in Early Childhood Education, my educational philosophy has grown and can be tied closely to Conscious Discipline, High Scope, and Montessori philosophies. I believe children learn best through play and should have role models actively engaged in play. This will help guide their experiences and understanding of the world around them. I believe that emotions should be expressed and that naming an emotion is a powerful tool for a student. Once they have put a name to the emotion, they can learn how to get through the emotion and learn self-regulatory skills. I believe in fostering student independence to help them feel empowered and prepared to be productive members of our society. This coming year I look forward to learning more about CUCC, its members, and how the LODO ministry collaborates with other ministries of the church.

As I am becoming a part of the LODO/CUCC family, I would like to share a little about myself. I recently celebrated my 6th anniversary with my loving husband, Marty. We have two children together: Eleanor (4) and William (2). Eleanor has been attending LODO with me since April 1, and William will join us in the fall. She loves that lunch is outside of her classroom and that she gets to eat with several classes in Fellowship Hall. Our family enjoys being out in nature and when the weather is nice you will find us gardening, fishing, swimming, hiking or really anything outside.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Sara Koenig,  
Incoming LODO Director



The past few months have been full and exciting around the LODO Ministry Team! We collaborated with the Search Committee and Council in hiring our new LODO Director, Sara Koenig. The LODO Ministry Team interviewed Sara on March 6 and recommended her to the Personnel Committee. Sara was offered the position and accepted it! Her first day was April 1 and we continue to be encouraged that she is a great fit for this position! We look forward to working alongside her in the coming years as LODO continues to serve our community of young children and their families.

Our last meeting was April 3, where we discussed transitions in LODO, including Sara's onboarding and training, Erika's transition and last day, along with Ashley's resignation from the Assistant Director Position and preparations for classroom coverage following her last day (April 18). It was agreed among the LODO Ministry Team that the Assistant Director Position will remain vacant until further notice. Raises were approved for all teaching staff to reflect standards across the nation and our local community. The 2025/2026 LODO budget was also approved. LODO saw an increase in enrollment and welcomed a few new families this Spring. The LODO Ministry Team continues to discuss how to best care for our staff and will be supporting them through meals, cards, and other goodies in the coming months. Please continue to pray for the health and sustainability of LODO and for our ministry team as we seek to guide and support this important ministry of the church.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kristin Veteto,  
LODO Ministry Team Chair





# Nurture & Education Ministry Team



## HERE'S THE SCOOP

**Sundays**

9:00-10:00 a.m.



### Learning & Fellowship for All Ages!

- Sunday School for ages 3-12th Grade.
- **Breakfast provided!**
- Adult Education Classes



**Sunday 5/4**



### Recognition of 2025 Graduates!

Cake and Punch reception  
prior to worship

**Sunday 5/11**

Celebration of all of the  
wonderful women in our lives!



**Sunday 5/18**



### Vacation Bible School Preview during Sunday School

Last day of Sunday School until September!



**July 28-30**

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**

### MAKE PLANS TO JOIN US!!!

Registration OPEN for attendees & volunteers

[cucc.mycokesburyvbs.com](http://cucc.mycokesburyvbs.com)

## NURTURE & EDUCATION

# Outreach & Advocacy Ministry Team

The Outreach & Advocacy Ministry Team Meeting was called to order on April 1 at 6:35 p.m. We viewed a video for our devotional, "Be the Light," from One Great Hour of Sharing. Pastor Rick led us in prayer. Special guest, Ava Summers educated us on the organization "Good Dads Columbia." This organization is also partnering with Alpha Hart-Lewis Elementary. The program is called "Strong Schools," and each third Wednesday of the month it brings students and dads, many of which are at risk dads, to build connections and communication, "helping kids and communities one dad at a time." After discussion, we agreed to work with this organization from our Alpha Hart Lewis Budget to support this effort. Llona is reaching out to Ava. Next sessions this year are April 16 and May 14 at 7:00 a.m.

Minutes from our last meeting on January 23 were approved. Next meeting will be May 6 at 6:30 p.m.

## **Ongoing Business:**

- ✿ Exploring Creation Justice - Team Earth: Wastewater treatment plant tour will be on April 3. On May 4, Steve Mahfood, a retired water specialist, will present at the Lunch & Learn event. On June 1, we will have a composting workshop event in partnership with Public Works City of Columbia.
- ✿ Advocacy Issues: We focused on reproductive healthcare developments in our state and country, refugee assistance impacts under the current administration, food bank cuts, Medicaid cuts, and the general voice of America being silenced. With these humanitarian issues growing daily, we will monitor our community and be the light where we can be.

## **New Business:**

- ✿ Allocations for 2025: We've budgeted as following: local missions at \$16,100; wider missions at \$9,900; special missions at \$5,000; and community assistance at \$750. Including Team Earth expenses, our total budget is allocated at \$32,250.

## **Team Reports:**

- ✿ Clean Up Columbia: will occur on 4/12.
- ✿ Alpha Hart Lewis: congratulations Columbia UCC on becoming an official Partner in Education! A donation of \$500 in March was made for the Good Dads program. We are looking for volunteers to watch the younger AHL Trusty Huskies for one hour during PTA meetings on Tuesday, April 8 from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. and/or on Thursday, May 1 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. We will be putting donation carts out in The Gathering Area for MAP Testing snacks and for Teacher Appreciation Week. AHL Carnival is April 25 at 5:30 p.m. and goes until 7:30 p.m. A presentation of Columbia UCC as a full Partner on Education will be on May 27 at a 9:00 a.m. assembly.
- ✿ Loaves and Fishes: the next Loaves and Fishes is April 21. The Souper Bowl of Caring from our church is going to pass along the \$762 collected to our designated fund account for future Loaves and Fishes expenses.
- ✿ Food Bank: the next food bank is April 22.

## **Mission Moments for April/May:**

- ✿ April 6: Clean Up Columbia announcement by Pastor Rick.
- ✿ April 13: Alpha Hart Lewis collection carts by Llona Weiss.
- ✿ April 27: Team Earth water seminar by Shelly Adams.
- ✿ May 4: Blanket Sunday for Church World Service offering on May 11 by Mark Duncan.
- ✿ June 1: Team Earth composting workshop by Shelly Adams.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Mark Duncan

Outreach & Advocacy Ministry Chair





# Outreach & Advocacy Ministry Team



Well, we're getting closer to the end of the 2024-2025 CPS school year, and you all at Columbia UCC have been so supportive to our Partner in Education, Alpha Hart Lewis Elementary School (AHL)! A big thanks to Kennedy Lucas who provided assistance with the little Trusty Huskies during the AHL's PTA meeting on April 8, to Jessica Lucas who volunteer with the Trusty Huskies on the May PTA meeting, and to Melba and Mahree who continue to volunteer as needed in the AHL Library (and any CUCC member who volunteered that I neglected to name). With our two shopping carts in The Gathering Area, we are collecting food stuffs/snacks for the AHL students during their MAP testing

weeks in April and May, and for the teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week (May 5-9, 2025). We are also sending personalized Thank You cards to the AHL teachers. We continue to collaborate with AHL and the Good Dads Strong Schools program, as well as with U.S. Bank who is going to partner with AHL and Good Dads; such inspiring work the Good Dads program does! AHL's PTA Carnival is Friday, April 25 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and we have Columbia UCC members volunteering so the students can have fun with their families and school friends/teachers. Please join us at AHL on Tuesday, May 27 at 9:00 a.m. for their school talent show where Columbia UCC will be presented with our certificate for being a full-fledged Partner in Education (not just Partnership Friend) for 5 years already! Thank you, again for contributing your time, talents, finances, snacks, homemade goodies, and all other support to Alpha Hart Lewis and our Columbia Public Schools!



The last Food Bank shift of this school year will be on Tuesday, May 27 at 5:30 pm. To sign up, please [CLICK HERE](#). We had a very small group in March; please help us wrap up the volunteer year at full force on May 27. There are more hungry people than ever and our help is needed urgently due to threatened cuts in other food assistance programs. The Food Bank will not offer evening shifts during June and July so our next group will be in late August.

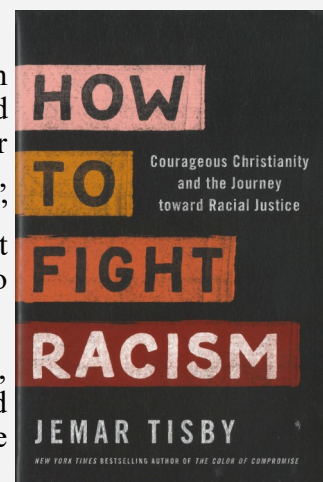
The April 21 meal at Loaves and Fishes consisted of pulled pork sandwiches (thank you Jolene Hackman for your donation of a pork roast and a big thank you to Mary for preparing the pulled pork), German potato salad (leftover from Fastnacht), Spanish rice, leftover chicken and sides (leftovers from the taco lunch) that were made into a Mexican casserole, lettuce salad, and a variety of desserts. PB&J's were made and provided by Mahree Skala. Servers were Mary Lorber, Debby (Mary's sister), Judi & Doug Privitt, Anne Heine, Patty Beeson, Jim Loveless, and Keith Birkes. We had approximately 152 servings. Thank you so much to everyone!!



## HOW TO FIGHT RACISM BOOK STUDY CONCLUDES IN MAY

We began studying the book, "How to Fight Racism" by Jamar Tisby back in September, looking at the first three chapters and the introduction. We continued our study in January with part two: "Relationships." Now we will conclude our study by looking at part three: "Commitment." This unit includes chapter eight, "How to Work for Racial Justice;" chapter nine, "How to Fight Systemic Racism;" and chapter ten, "How to Orient Your Life to Racial Justice." We will study these at 9:00 a.m. on May 4, 11 & 18 in the Fellowship Hall. Each session includes a video we will watch and then discuss the book.

If you would like a copy of the book, there are a few available in the church office, or you can order it online. Even if you didn't read the book, however, the study and discussion will be very rich. Come and join us! Pastor Rick will be leading the study; let him know if you have any questions!



# Team Earth

There is a photo going around the net which, unlike many, is very true. It's a picture showing what the world would look like without human influence versus what it looks like today. The visions are striking and, unfortunately, quite real. Not only does our land, water, and air suffer from pollutants humans have created, but we have lost hundreds of animal species as well. More is lost every year due to our overpopulation, waste, and our insatiable want for more. The following are just a few of North American species on the critically endangered list.

**Red Wolf:** These canines used to live throughout the eastern and southern U.S. They now exist only in North Carolina. Their prey includes deer, raccoons, rabbits and other small mammals. There are only 20-30 individuals left in the wild.



**Axolotl:** This is a unique amphibian with feathery gills, webbed feet, and a dorsal fin. They are like salamanders that never matured. Thus, they can only live in water and eat crustaceans, insect eggs, mollusks, and tiny fish. Their biggest threat is water pollution.

**Vancouver Island Marmot:** These mammals live in the forest, grassland, and rocky mountain habitats of Canada's Vancouver Island. This species of rodent is much larger than the marmots of the U.S. Rockies. Human activity (logging and destruction of grasslands) is to blame for their rapid decline.



But why should we care? When an entire species is eliminated from their local area, chaos can ensue. One example is when the wolf population in Yellowstone National Park was hunted to extinction, the deer and elk population ballooned. That caused overgrazing which affected not only the grasslands, but the local trees, wildlife, and water supply. Once wolves were reintroduced, balance was restored and the park gradually returned to homeostasis. (Sources: [ifaw.org](http://ifaw.org); and [yellowstonepark.com/wolf-reintroduction](http://yellowstonepark.com/wolf-reintroduction))

The Grey Wolf population is still struggling as the poem below notes:

## Grey Wolf

*by O. Fred Donaldson*

We are sending you to the Great God.  
Tell Him that we who invented forgiveness do not forgive.  
That we, who speak of trust cannot trust;  
That we, who invoke faith would not believe.  
I write as though you could read  
But I know you understand  
When you have left the forests and tundras  
And no longer leave your sinewy trails within the snow  
Tell Him that you were made on a different day.  
Your howls of bewilderment will echo  
With the mountain winds.  
And your songs will join those of the whales.  
Tell Him for me,  
"Forgive them Father for they know not what they do."



# Worship & Music Ministry Team

Hi all. I'm excited to announce the next steps I will be taking in my life. I have been accepted into the Doctorate of Choral Conducting program at the University of Southern Mississippi beginning this fall. It is an excellent program and I feel very fortunate to have been accepted. I feel that this will help me achieve my long-term goal of becoming a university choral director. With that said, I will be ending my tenure as CUCC music coordinator on June 1.

Working for this church over the past two years has been a wonderful experience. It was my first official church music job and brought with it many learning opportunities. First of all, I learned to plan according to the church Liturgical calendar. This was a big adjustment for me, as the church I grew up in did not have significant annual dates outside of Christmas and Easter. Second, I directed my first bell choir. I'd played in bell groups in the past, but directing one demanded a fairly steep learning curve. I'm especially grateful to Lea Marienfeld, the bell expert, for her help during my time here. I'd like to thank all the wonderful musicians I've worked with here. Your talent and passion has been inspiring. You've all demonstrated the love you have for music and the importance it holds in your life. You've treated me and all your fellow musicians so well.

As was recently announced, Mike Pierson will be taking over as music coordinator in June. As you all already know, you could not find a better person to fill this role. He brings with him a career of experience and he is truly an expert in his field. While I am sad to leave, I have the utmost confidence that the church is in very good hands.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Casey Wood,  
Music Coordinator



My name is Edie Diel and I am the new Music & Worship Ministry Team Chair. In case you think I'm new to Columbia UCC, my family and I joined this church in 2013. We moved to Arizona for a few years while our grandson was there (we are very devoted to him), and we have now moved back to Columbia. I am no stranger to the UCC church as I come from a long line of UCC ministers. Looking forward to working with you all as my new role as Music & Worship Ministry Team Chair. Please share your comments and concerns with me! The big news for us this month is in the music department. Casey graduates May 17 and is moving on with his life's adventures. We wish him all the best! Join us June 1 in wishing him Bon Voyage. Our new Music Director, Mike Pierson, begins on June 1. Let's all give him a hearty Columbia UCC welcome into the position.

Our next Music & Worship Ministry Team meeting is May 13 at 5:30 p.m. and all are welcome to join us in the fun and fellowship as we do God's work.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Edie Diel,  
Worship & Music Ministry Chair



## WELCOME TO QUORUS!

Columbia United Church of Christ is pleased to be in partnership with [Quorus, the LGBTQIAA Choral ensemble of Columbia!](#)

Quorus uses our facility for rehearsals, and we will the opportunity to work with them as they schedule performances around the area. We are also always thrilled to have Quorus join us for worship, praising God with their inclusive repertoire.

Quorus would love to have CUCC members join their choir! To learn more about Quorus, [CLICK HERE](#).

If you are interested in joining them or talking to Audra Sergal, their director and coordinator, [CLICK HERE](#).





# Scouting America

This Spring, Troop 708 welcomed a new group of scouts who crossed over to us from area Cub Scout packs. They've come together to form the Poison Dart Frog Patrol. In March, we held our Fishing Campout, with several scouts earning the Fishing Merit Badge which included catching, cleaning, and cooking their fish. In April we had seven scouts attend the Order of the Arrow Section Conclave. The Order of the Arrow is scouting's national honor society where members must meet a rank requirement, a minimum number of nights camped, and be voted in by their peers.



Troop 4475 is excited the spring has finally arrived. In March, the troop planned a hiking campout at Ha Ha Tonka State Park. Friday night we did not travel because of the severe weather forecast. Instead, we got up early the next morning and drove to the park. Saturday afternoon was gloriously warm and perfect for the six plus mile hike and backpacking trail meals. Saturday evening it rained, and then temperatures dipped below freezing. The Scouts were excited to earn another purple bead! On Sunday morning, we had a light dusting of snow. A crazy weekend for the weather but a good lesson in planning for the Scouts.

In March, we also held our spring Court of Honor in conjunction with Troop 708. Many rank advancements and several merit badges were awarded. We even got a new picture of the troop in our formal uniforms. Things are going well for Troop 4475.





# THANK YOU!

Thank you for your generous gift to Back Bay Mission! Your gift to *Friends of the Mission* makes it possible to meet the most urgent needs of the poor and marginalized of the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Your gift is already at work strengthening neighborhoods, seeking justice, and transforming lives. You're helping a homeowner stay in their home, providing homeless families with apartments, making sure people have enough food, and giving people the support they need to make their lives better.

Most importantly, your gift is making sure that Back Bay Mission is here to provide a safe and welcoming place for everyone who comes through our doors. Thank you for partnering with us through your generous gift. We - and those we serve - are ever grateful.

Grace and Peace,  
James Pennington, Executive Director



Thank you for your generous donation (of \$900.00) to advance our mission to help children of incarcerated mothers at Chillicothe Correctional Center. We are excited about working with the resident mothers as they seek to learn to be better parents for their children.

Sincerely,  
Barb Burton, Director

Thank you for standing with us against hunger with our recent donation of \$200.00. Support like yours makes it possible for The Food Bank to make a lasting difference for thousands of individuals and families each month across our 32-county service area.

It is sobering to know that one in seven adults and one in five children in Missouri struggle with hunger regularly. Many of these individuals are facing difficult trade-offs, balancing essential costs like grocery trips and utility bills as temperatures warm up. Thanks to support like yours, we are able to share food and bring hope to folks like these who need it most.

Thank you for your meaningful donation towards our mission to end hunger.

Gratefully,  
Lindsay Young Lopez, President and CEO



Thank you for thinking of us! Thank you for being you!

Thank you for all you do and for helping our family this holiday season.

Thank you so much for your Christmas gifts for me and my kids. May God bless you everyday!!

This year I fell on hard times so my kids wouldn't have had Christmas. I am so thankful and appreciative for these gifts. Thanks for being kind and helping me and my family!

Signed,  
Various VAC Christmas Drive Families



# International Missions

## CUCC IS WORKING IN ISRAEL/PALESTINE

With the hope of promoting peace in the Middle East, Global Ministries partners with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL). The ELCJHL actively engages in a variety of ministries. As part of its mission, the ELCJHL works to ensure education for Palestinian children, both Christian and Muslim, and have made education the highest priority. The ELCJHL operates K-12 schools that provide a quality education for more than 2000 students in the cities of Bethlehem, Beit Sahour, Ramallah, and Beit Jala. The ELCJHL schools serve the youth of their communities, regardless of gender, race, religion, or ability to pay.

Through **Global Ministries**, CUCC is a partner in mission with over 200 mission partners around the world, including the ELCJHL. Keep Global Ministries, the ELCJHL, and the people of Israel/Palestine in your prayers this month as they do God's work on our behalf!



## “ROOTS IN THE RUINS” YEAR IN REVIEW

by Elena Huegel

As a review of my ministry over the last year, in preparation for new workshops and courses ahead, I decided to read the “Gratitude Journal” where we invite participants in the different “Retoños en las ruinas: esperanza en el trauma (Roots in the Ruins: Hope in Trauma)” activities to express their thoughts and feelings during and after this personal and community experience. Journaling is one of the basic tools we encourage people to practice as they explore their healing journey. I hope that as you read a few of these brief but heartfelt entries, you will be encouraged to begin your own gratitude journal, either as an individual or church community. (Roots in the Ruins, based in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico, is a project of Global Ministries)

*“I just have to say thanks to the Lord for this beautiful gift of hope, faith, kindness and service which came to me at the precise moment I needed it. Roots in the ruins has been a treasure for me, something I will cherish but also share with others in service of the Kingdom. I will never forget the hands that accepted and encouraged me and opened my own hands to bless and share God's love.”*

-Vitalia Vásquez (Pastor), The Pentecostal Church of Chile, Chile

*“An oasis in the desert, firm ground in my instability, fresh air for my soul... this is what Roots in the Ruins has been for me. This path of healing opened up in the midst of chaos. The Roots in the Ruins program came to help me rebuild my life and the lives of the members of my church.”*

-Noemí Santiago (Pastor), Church of the Nazarene, Oaxaca, México

*“I am especially grateful for the gift that is each participant in this course. The new faces, the little piece of homeland that each of us brings with us, the good humor, the spirit of cooperation, the facilitation team, the songs, the topics. The community life along with the subjects that we studied have made this course pleasant, live-giving and healing. I hope that this space and time will have generated ties that will keep us together as we continue to weave Shalom wherever we are sent.”*

-Ernesto Martín Guerrero Zavala, Director, IESII

It is with hearts and minds full of gratitude that the facilitators of the Roots in the Ruins: Hope in Trauma program and the staff of the Institute for Intercultural Studies and Research begin to plan the activities for next year. New courses will be taught by trained facilitators in Chile and different parts of Mexico. We are excited as we plan to gather in July for the first time as trained facilitators from Chile, Nicaragua, Honduras, Puerto Rico, Mexico and the US, to evaluate the program along with several doctoral research students, to share our experiences and update our learning in trauma healing and resilience development. But most of all, to look toward the future with renewed vision of critical hope, and healing.





# On the Church Calendar in May

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 6:30 p.m. - Troop 44/75	2 LODO Picnic— offsite	3
4 9:00 a.m. - Faith Education 9:00 a.m. - Book Study 10:00 a.m. - Fellowship 10:30 a.m. - Worship 12:00 p.m. - Team Earth Lunch & Learn	5 5:00 p.m. - Membership & Care Team Meeting 7:00 p.m. - Scouting America	6 10:00 a.m. - Quilters 10:30 a.m. - Staff Meeting 12:30 p.m. - Bible Study 6:30 p.m. - Outreach & Advocacy Team Meeting	7 6:00 p.m. - Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. - Celebration Singers	10 9:30 a.m. - Women's Fellowship	11 5:00 p.m. - Sanctuary booked for private event	12 9:00 a.m. - Fellowship Hall booked for private event
11 - MOTHER'S DAY 9:00 a.m. - Faith Education 9:00 a.m. - Book Study 10:00 a.m. - Fellowship 10:30 a.m. - Worship	12 7:00 p.m. - Scouting America	13 10:00 a.m. - Quilters 10:30 a.m. - Staff Meeting 12:30 p.m. - Bible Study 6:30 p.m. - Troop 708 6:30 p.m. - LODO Graduation 6:30 p.m. - Worship & Music Team Meeting	14 6:00 p.m. - Prayer Shawl 6:00 p.m. - Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. - Celebration Singers	15	16 1:00 p.m. - LODO Last Day	19
18 9:00 a.m. - Faith Education 9:00 a.m. - Book Study 10:00 a.m. - Fellowship 10:30 a.m. - Worship 12:00 p.m. - Annual Congregational Meeting and Pot Luck	19 9:30 a.m. - Team Earth Field Trip 4:30 p.m. - Leaves and Fishes 7:00 p.m. - Scouting America	20 10:00 a.m. - Quilters 10:30 a.m. - Staff Meeting 12:30 p.m. - Bible Study 1:00 p.m. - Pause to Color 6:30 p.m. - Council Meeting	21 10:00 a.m. - worship at The Bluffs (Pastor Rick) 6:00 p.m. - Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. - Celebration Singers	22 5:00 p.m. - Inclusion & Affirmation Meeting	23	24
25 8:30 a.m. - Adult Bible Study 9:00 a.m. - Fellowship 9:30 a.m. - Worship	26 7:00 p.m. - Scouting America	27 10:00 a.m. - Quilters 10:30 a.m. - Staff Meeting 12:30 p.m. - Bible Study 5:30 p.m. - Food Bank	28 6:00 p.m. - Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. - Celebration Singers	29	30	31

# The Communicator

Columbia United Church of Christ  
An Open and Affirming Congregation ONA #1575

3201 I-70 Dr. NW  
Columbia, MO 65202-3296  
573-445-7931



**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.



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## Interested in Church Membership?

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

**Become  
Part of  
Our  
Church  
Family**

## 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.

## 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!**