

# The Communicator

April 2026

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

"It's a Miracle"

Without a doubt, the most special, hopeful, meaningful time of year for me is spring. The weather is getting warmer, days are getting longer, bulbs are beginning to poke their heads out of the soil, and trees are beginning to bud. It is a season of renewal, a season of hope, and a season where God's presence is even more discernable in the world. Spring is my favorite time of year.

Spring is also the season where Holy Week holds prominence. For a Christian, Holy Week is the most celebratory time of the year; and for me, it is the most moving. The pageantry of Palm Sunday and the Passion as it foreshadows the week to come; the journey of Jesus through the hypocrisy of the Temple; the loving expression of Maundy Thursday; and the sorrow of Good Friday; all culminating in the Easter Miracle Sunday morning. What an emotional roller coaster it is to shout "save us" one Sunday, "crucify him" on Friday, then "Alleluia" the next Sunday morning. The dynamic of Holy Week is mind-boggling.

But Holy Week did not happen in a vacuum. The events that led to Holy Week began as early as Jesus' first public sermon, the Sermon on the Mountain (*Matthew 5-7*), when he first laid out his progressive agenda and political stance. This inaugural address, which overturned the tables of his culture and upset the apple cart of the patriarchy, was the first clue those in authority had that this man was truly speaking God's word; and that word was dangerous to their power structures.

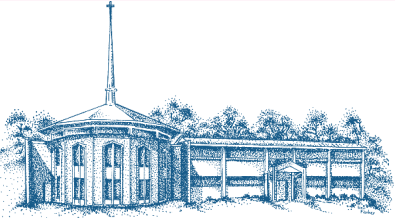
The straw that camel's back was the raising of Lazarus. This event, which we celebrate each year on Lazarus Sunday (the Sunday before Palm Sunday), illustrated the danger to the patriarchy of Jesus' message. He illustrated God's glory by facilitating this incredible miracle; *"and the chief priests and Pharisees said, 'What are we to do? This man is performing many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation.' and from that day on, they planned to put him to death."* (*John 11*) The next day, Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey as the crowd shouted, "save us." *"The chief priests and Pharisees took one look...and said, 'It's out of control.'"* (*John 12:19*)

Why did Jesus have die? This was not a transactional requirement by a vindictive God, as fundamentalist Christianity proclaims. Jesus did not *have* to die; he died because the people of his community let fear overpower joy. Most countries occupied by Rome were forced to worship Roman gods; but the Roman forces occupying Israel had made a tenuous agreement to allow the Jewish people to continue to worship God. The Romans did not do this because they respected God or religion; they did this because they felt this was a way to keep peace. The leaders of the Temple compromised their relationship with God to enter into this agreement with the Romans, causing the religious hypocrisy that was the source of Jesus' objection. Jesus was a trouble maker and they were afraid that Jesus would mess up their tenuous agreement with the Romans. Their fear led them to reject the miracles of Jesus' ministry, the wisdom of Jesus' teaching, and led them to kill Jesus in an ignorant way.

One of the themes that runs thorough the entirety of this dynamic is that God is working miracles, even in the midst of desolation. Even on Good Friday, God did not leave Their people alone; God was working miracles in the life of Jesus, and in the lives of God's people. But no matter how miraculous, some people could not handle it. Some people chose fear over joy and rejected the miracles of Jesus, the miracle of the Resurrection, the unconditional love embodied on the cross. Fear can overwhelm joy, if a society allows it to do so.



For us, living in a time of disparity and desolation, the Good News of Jesus is Good News indeed. God's miracles are for each one of us, if we can choose joy over fear. God never leaves God's people alone; God is always working miracles in our midst; and as we shout "Alleluia" on the Sundays of Easter and beyond, remember that "Alleluia" is not just for Easter. God is working miracles in us, always. **-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

**Mike Pierson**  
Music Coordinator

**Steve Jannetti**  
Organist/Accompanist

**Alexandra Roper**  
Office Administrator

**Sara Koenig**  
Director, Little One's Day Out

**Caleb Berry**  
Custodian

### **Sunday Schedule:**

9:00 a.m. Faith Education  
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)**



### **Quilt Raffle- Win a Beautiful Quilt!**

Get your raffle tickets for a Log Cabin quilt pieced by Jessica Jenks and quilted by the CUCC Quilters. Look for it in the gathering area on Sundays. Drawing will take place at the annual meeting on May 17, and all proceeds will go to the 2026 Festival of Sharing. If you would like to purchase tickets, or have any questions, talk to [Mahree Skala](#).

### **IT'S TIME TO CLEAN UP!**

#### **SHOW OUR RESPECT FOR GOD'S CREATION ON APRIL 11**

The citywide "Clean Up Columbia Day" is Saturday, April 11, 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. We'll clean up the trash along I-70 Drive NW. Last year we picked up 49 bags full! With enough volunteers it goes quickly though. Please sign up by April 1; to do so [CLICK HERE](#), put your name on the list in the Gathering Area, or contact [Mahree Skala](#).

Let us know if you're coming so we have plenty of supplies. Cloth gloves, reflective vests, etc. will be provided. Bring your favorite gloves if you prefer and wear sturdy shoes/boots. Older children and youth are welcome to come with their parents. Scouts and their leaders were great helpers last year, and they will be helping us this year, too!

Rain date is April 18, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

### **WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

The CUCC Women's Fellowship will host their monthly gathering on April 9 at 9:30 a.m. in the Gathering Area. A wonderful breakfast will be served, and the women will continue their Bible study based on the curriculum "Finding Resilience, Joy, and our Identity in Jesus Christ." All women of the church are welcome! Come and join us!

### **HOLY WEEK WORSHIP**

Holy Week is upon us; the most celebratory time of the year! Good Friday (4/3) worship will be in the Sanctuary at 7:00 p.m. with special readings and music. Easter Sunrise worship will be at 6:30 a.m. outside in the Shelter House, followed by breakfast. Our Easter Egg hunt and activities will begin at 9:00 a.m. and Celebration Worship at 10:30 a.m.

**SOMETHING NEW THIS YEAR-** We are reviving our Maundy Thursday worship service celebrating the last supper Jesus and his friends shared, the promises of New Life and Resurrection that were given at that meal, and the "Love Commandment" Jesus gave his friends. We will gather on Maundy Thursday (4/2) around the tables in The Gathering Space (upstairs hospitality area) of the church from 12:15-1:00 p.m. and share this special time together. We hope you will join us!

# Moderator's Moment

## Easter: A Season of Renewal and Redemption

As we begin this new month with Easter morning, we are reminded once again of the heart of our faith: God made flesh, Jesus Christ, who came to atone for our sins and offer us redemption. This is God's ultimate gift to us—love that sacrifices, love that restores, love that transforms.

Growing up, our church held Wednesday evening services throughout Lent. Those simple, mid-week gatherings remain some of my most meaningful memories. Each service included a time for hymn requests, and one of my favorite Lenten hymns was "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross." Its words still stir my heart today:

*"When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of Glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride."*

This hymn captures the depth of Christ's sacrifice and the awe we feel when we reflect on the love poured out for us. Signs of Spring, signs of Grace.

As Easter arrives, so does the unmistakable burst of spring. Trees budding, flowers pushing through the soil, birds singing again- creation itself seems to echo the message of resurrection. These signs remind us that God's renewing work is not only a story of long ago but something unfolding around us and within us every day.

In this season, may we open our hearts to the joy, change, and hope that God continues to bring. May the truth of Easter renew our spirits just as spring renews the earth. Blessings to each of you as we celebrate the risen Christ and the new life He brings.

Grace and Peace,  
Jerry Kiesling,  
Council Moderator



## COLUMBIA UCC CHURCH COUNCIL

<b>Moderator:</b>	Jerry Kiesling	<a href="mailto:rollzierp50@gmail.com"><u>rollzierp50@gmail.com</u></a>
<b>Vice Moderator:</b>	Corinne Remeika	<a href="mailto:remeikas@tranquility.net"><u>remeikas@tranquility.net</u></a>
<b>Secretary:</b>	Alethea Tennill	<a href="mailto:atennill108@gmail.com"><u>atennill108@gmail.com</u></a>
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Deborah Long Birkes	<a href="mailto:dlong@elon.edu"><u>dlong@elon.edu</u></a>
<b>Recording Treasurer:</b>	Christine Staelens	<a href="mailto:tigersfour@gmail.com"><u>tigersfour@gmail.com</u></a>
<b>Building &amp; Grounds:</b>	Ted Dachroeden	<a href="mailto:gpadoc4gd@gmail.com"><u>gpadoc4gd@gmail.com</u></a>
<b>Fellowship &amp; Hospitality:</b>	Mary Lorber-Solt	<a href="mailto:eldercow@gmail.com"><u>eldercow@gmail.com</u></a>
<b>Finance &amp; Stewardship:</b>	VACANT	
<b>Inclusion &amp; Affirmation:</b>	Ashley Ramirez	<a href="mailto:ashknight0628@gmail.com"><u>ashknight0628@gmail.com</u></a>
<b>Little One's Day Out:</b>	Kristin Veteto	<a href="mailto:kristinnoelveteto@gmail.com"><u>kristinnoelveteto@gmail.com</u></a>
<b>Membership &amp; Care:</b>	Judi Privitt	<a href="mailto:judiprivitt811@gmail.com"><u>judiprivitt811@gmail.com</u></a>
<b>Nurture &amp; Education:</b>	Lena Muench	<a href="mailto:cfg323@yahoo.com"><u>cfg323@yahoo.com</u></a>
<b>Outreach &amp; Advocacy:</b>	Mahree Skala	<a href="mailto:skalamahree@yahoo.com"><u>skalamahree@yahoo.com</u></a>
<b>Worship &amp; Music:</b>	Edie Diel	<a href="mailto:edie@thedandegroup.com"><u>edie@thedandegroup.com</u></a>
<b>Pastor:</b>	Rev. Rick Oberle	<a href="mailto:rick@columbiaucc.com"><u>rick@columbiaucc.com</u></a>



# April Sunday Volunteer Schedule

Date	Greeter	Ushers	Worship Leader	Tech Booth
04/03	N/A	Joe Remeika Corinne Remeika	Mahree Skala	Josh Muench
04/05 (sunrise)	N/A	N/A	Llona Weiss	N/A
04/05	Susan Dunham	Phillip Neale Christine Staelens	Ashley Ramirez	Brent Marcks Lorry Dreier
04/12	Jolene Kirchhoff	Llona Weiss Pat Forward	Jessica Lucas	Adam Veteto Josh Muench
04/19	Carol Duermeyer	Christine Staelens	Judi Privitt	Doug Privitt Ted Dachroeden
04/26		John Muench Brenda Muench	Llona Weiss	John Graves Carissa Graves

# April Birthdays

*Brent Marcks - 04/06*

*Linda Grotewiel - 04/07*

*Chantal Kibaro - 04/08*

*Chris Bach - 04/10*

*Evelyn Marcks - 04/13*

*Mary Lorber-Sott - 04/14*

*Ryan Pulley - 04/17*

*Virian Scallion - 04/17*

*Jan Barry - 04/18*

*Connie Loveless - 04/18*

*Addison Melton - 04/18*

*Trenton Minor - 04/20*

*Brandon Lavelly - 04/21*

*Mark Eveler - 04/23*

*Mike Van Hove - 04/23*

*Amy Crousore - 04/28*

*Carolyn Malicoat - 4/30*

# Columbia UCC Council Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 6:39 p.m. on January 20, 2026 by Jerry Keisling. Pastor Rick opened with a prayer. Present: Jerry Kiesling, Corinne Remeika, Deborah Long-Birkes, Ted Dachroeden, Mary Lorber-Solt, Lena Muench via zoom, Ashley Ramirez, Judi Privitt, Rick Oberle, and Alethea Tennill.

Corinne Remeika made a motion to approve the agenda with a second from Ashley Ramirez. The motion passed. Ted Dachroeden made a motion to approve the January Council minutes. Second by Ashley Ramirez. Motion passed.

Council will discuss “Not Your Parents Offering Plate” Chapter 7 in March.

## **Unfinished Business:**

- ⊗ New Light for sign: Waiting on more information.
- ⊗ Nominating Committee for 2026: Corinne Remeika and committee will start working on asking members to fulfill Council Terms. The following terms end May 31, 2026: Secretary, Building and Grounds, Finance and Stewardship. The following terms are eligible to run again: Treasurer, Little Ones Day Out, Nurture and Education, Worship and Music.
- ⊗ Solar Columbia Update: Waiting for contact on when we will be put on the schedule. Aimee Anderson is working on completing federal grants.
- ⊗ Security Policy Team: Consists of Pastor Rick, Edie Diehl, Judi Privitt, Jerry Kiesling, and Corinne Remeika.
- ⊗ Visioning and Strategic Planning: What goals are following the strategic plan?
- ⊗ ONA Convocation: In St. Louis on March 7. Pastor Rick and Ashley Ramirez will present a workshop. If anyone else would like to go please let them know.
- ⊗ Annual Congregational Meeting: May 17; it will be a potluck.

## **New Business:**

- ⊗ Bid for HVAC replacements: Ted Dachroeden has received several bids to replace the HVAC units on the flat roof of The Sanctuary. He made a motion to accept the bid from Albright Heating and Air Conditioning to replace three units. Lena Muench seconded the motion. Motion passed.
- ⊗ Motion to rehire Steve Jannetti as our organist coming from Edie Diehl. Second from Ashley Ramirez. Motion passed.
- ⊗ The Church Council of Columbia United Church of Christ authorizes Aimee Andersen, in consultation with the Church Moderator, to act on behalf of the congregation in all manners that regard our Solar Project. This includes signing legal documents concerning government rebates and the installation of solar power. Motion made by Ted Dachroeden, second from Judi Privitt. Motion passed.

Pastor Rick is happy to be back, but had a great time on vacation. Financials were presented. Ministry team reports were presented.

Pastor Rick closed us in prayer.

Motion to adjourn by Edie Diehl, seconded by Mary Lorber-Solt. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Alethea Tennill,  
Secretary



# Finance & Stewardship Ministry Team

## Financial Update

	Actual	Budget	Over/(Under)
February Income	\$40,023.32	\$23,809.26	\$16,214.06
February Expenses	\$34,191.40	\$29,872.83	\$4,318.57
YTD Income	\$60,676.94	\$51,471.73	\$9,205.21
YTD Expenses	\$68,785.15	\$70,485.66	(\$1,700.51)
Surplus/(Deficit)	(\$8,108.21)	(\$19,013.93)	\$10,905.72
February Joyful Giving	\$38,331.32	\$23,119.26	\$15,212.06
YTD Joyful Giving	\$58,381.95	\$50,091.73	\$8,290.22

## Worship Attendance

02/01	81
02/08	73
02/15 (Ash Wednesday Noon)	16
02/18 (Ash Wednesday Evening)	51
02/18	90
02/22	81

I joined CUCC because it is a community that doesn't preach *at* people but offers genuine opportunities to put God's teachings into action. Did you know that there are many different discretionary funds that we can contribute to? Each Fund reflects an opportunity for us to say, "This is important to me!" Funds include Joyful Giving, Youth Ministry, Solar Panel project, LODO and more.

I haven't always been able to financially support the church as much as I wanted to, but I have tried to find other ways to give back. Some are called to be the feet of God by walking with those in need, while others are called to be God's voice for those who are hurting spiritually.

Last year you may recall that there was a lot of talk about the budget. There was going to be a shortfall, so the Finance & Stewardship team came to the congregation and asked us all to consider giving more to the church. During what were difficult times for many, our congregation rallied and we ended the year with a small shortfall- it could have been much worse. The Finance & Stewardship team is grateful to everyone who found ways to contribute in 2025. Reflecting the 2025 experience and the continued economic uncertainty, the 2026 budget was passed "reflecting a concerted effort to minimize expenses without compromising our support of outreach and advocacy efforts." We hear you and support all that you do for our church.

As a church family, we rely on a variety of contributions- time, talent, and money. I encourage everyone to prayerfully consider what God is asking from us and give what we are able.

Respectfully submitted,  
Aimee Anderson  
Finance & Stewardship  
Ministry Team Member



# Inclusion and Affirmation Ministry Team

About a year ago, when I was feeling pretty down about the state of the world, I was fortunate enough to find the Netflix series, *Love on the Spectrum*. It is a reality show about the dating lives of individuals with autism. It is so uplifting that you can't help but get truly invested in the lives of those looking for love. It also makes you recognize the beautiful, quirky commonalities we all have when looking for a partner.

April is Autism Acceptance Month. Formerly known as "Autism Awareness Month," the name was changed in 2021 to better represent the purpose of the month. According to the Autism Society, "this month emphasizes understanding, inclusion, and support, moving beyond awareness towards meaningful acceptance." Without realizing it, by watching a feel-good Netflix show, I was practicing one recommended step toward this goal.

On the website "Dream Bigger," they offer ways we can each move beyond just awareness toward acceptance and connecting more with people with autism. These include:

- ⊗ Listening to voices and experiences of people with autism
- ⊗ Celebrating neurodiversity as part of human variation
- ⊗ Creating environments where individuals with autism can thrive
- ⊗ Removing barriers rather than trying to change people with autism

As the blog states, "The acceptance movement recognizes that autism brings both challenges and strengths. Many autistic individuals possess remarkable abilities in pattern recognition, detailed thinking, creativity, and focus."

There are some simple ways you can celebrate Autism Acceptance Month in April and on an ongoing basis:

- ⊗ Follow social media accounts of individuals with autism and autism organizations and share the information you learn
- ⊗ Read books or attend presentations to further your understanding
- ⊗ Consider ways to make your workplace more autism friendly and increase everyone's understanding (ideas are available at [autismsociety.org](https://autismsociety.org) and other sites).
- ⊗ Attend events that have been designed to be more inclusive. Participation encourages more businesses to hold these events
- ⊗ Wear rainbow colors (now more widely accepted) or blue on April 2 to spark conversation and show support

For more information and stories, visit: [autismsociety.org](https://autismsociety.org) or [aane.org](https://aane.org).

Respectfully submitted,  
Gail Marriott  
Inclusion & Affirmation  
Ministry Team Member



## 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.



# LODO Ministry Team

March has been a month full of growth, learning, and exciting opportunities for both our students and staff! On March 6, our teachers participated in a Professional Development Day focused on enriching classroom experiences and strengthening teaching practices. Throughout the day, teachers engaged in training on Conscious Discipline, Early Childhood Math, and Music in the Classroom. We extend a special thank you to Judi Privitt, Mary Rook, and Kristin Veteto for their time and talent. Our staff walked away with valuable tools and strategies that are already making a positive impact in the classroom.

We are also excited to invite our school families and community to our upcoming Literacy Night on April 7 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. This special evening will celebrate the joy of reading and include a visit from the Daniel Boone Regional Library, as well as a Scholastic Book Fair where books will be available for purchase. In addition, the book fair will be open to congregation members on April 12 following church services. We hope you'll join us for this fun and meaningful event!

As we look ahead to the spring season, we are eager to begin gardening activities with our students. This hands-on experience is a wonderful way to connect children with nature and foster a love of learning. If gardening is something you are passionate about and would like to share with our students, please reach out to [Sara Koenig](#) to get involved.

Finally, we are now enrolling for the 2026–2027 school year! We are thrilled to offer new extended hours through LODO Plus, now available from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. These expanded hours will help support more families in our community. If you are interested in learning more or scheduling a tour, we would love to connect with you and show you the magic that happens in our program each day.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. We look forward to a joyful and blessed spring season!

Respectfully Submitted,

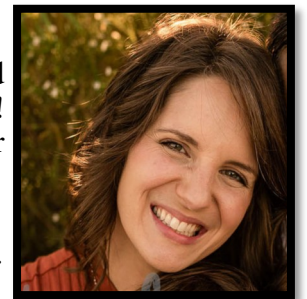
Sara Koenig,  
LODO Director



The daffodils are in bloom and that means Spring has sprung and us gardeners get the itch to plant seeds! I could take this in multiple directions like the opportunity to nourish growing children at LODO, but what I really want to impart is actually... gardening. If you have a green thumb or a love of gardening and would like to share that love with young children, please contact the LODO Director, Sara to express your interest in bringing some Spring gardening magic to the LODO children! Your impact will continue to grow in the hearts and minds of these young children!

The LODO Ministry Team has been reviewing our 2026 vision statements and engaging with the CUCC congregation in meaningful ways is top of the list! Gardening was discussed at our March meeting and I know we have many in our congregation that have gifts to share. In other news, the LODO Ministry Team passed the 2026/27 LODO budget in March and will be reviewing policies and procedures at our June meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kristin Veteto,  
LODO Ministry Team Chair



## **2026-2027 Enrollment** **August 24, 2026 - May 21, 2027**

Lightning Bugs Class: 1 year old before 8/1/26  
(Only available 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.)

Lambs Class: 2 years old before 8/1/26

Lions/Leopards Class: 3 years old before 8/1/26

Leap Frogs/Leopards Class: 4 years old before 8/1/26

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!

[lodo.sara.koenig@gmail.com](mailto:lodo.sara.koenig@gmail.com)

573-445-2661



# LITERACY NIGHT

APRIL 7TH

5:30PM-7:00PM

SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIR!

SPECIAL GUEST DANIEL  
BOONE LIBRARY

*Books*

# Membership & Care Ministry Team

Did you know Walter Schroeder used to run up and down the halls of the Missouri Capitol Building in his younger days? He has written and published many stories about growing up in Jefferson City. Wife Pat can trace her ancestry back several generations. She lived next door to Sue Ann Schaefer's Aunt and Uncle and Sue Ann and her cousins used to take great delight in teasing Pat's family's dog. Gary Ehrhardt is a true "Renaissance Man" with his knowledge of astronomy and the physical sciences. That's only brushing the surface of his vast knowledge on a wide variety of subjects. And he likes to assemble model airplanes.

These are just a few of the things that I've learned while visiting some of our members who do not get out very often. The Membership and Care Team has a "Visits to Church Members" Ministry. Like so many of life's lessons, I learned and became comfortable visiting people along with my good buddy, Alice Moon. It's one of those giving opportunities that you get so much more in return. If you are interested in joining the journey, please let me or another team member know. It's an adventure.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jolene Kirchoff  
Membership & Care  
Ministry Team Member



# Worship & Music Ministry Team

Here we are in the middle of Lent, walking our paths and anticipating Holy Week. It is hard to believe that Holy Week is almost upon us!

Holy Week is always very special to me, as I was born on Sorrowful Saturday! So, this year Pastor Rick and I have been talking about Holy Week and how to make it even more special. Maundy Thursday is an important part of that week, so as a special treat we are reviving our Maundy Thursday service for those who have been missing it. We'll have communion and a celebration of Jesus' Love Commandment. We will have it at 12:15 p.m. on Thursday, April 2; it will be over by 1:00 p.m. This will be a special treat for those of us who don't like to drive at night. Good Friday will, as usual, be at 7:00 p.m., our dark, sad service mourning the death of Jesus Christ. Then Easter Sunday morning we will be rejoicing in the resurrection at 6:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Please join us as you are able.

Our next Music & Worship Ministry Team meeting is April 23 at 5:00 p.m. All are welcome to join us in fun and fellowship as we do God's work together.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Edie Diel,  
Worship & Music  
Ministry Team 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](#).



# Nurture & Education Ministry Team

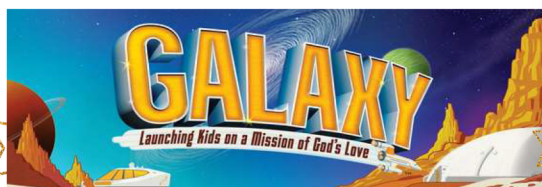


**WE ARE SHINING BRIGHT!**

**SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR KIDS  
& YOUTH AGES 3-12<sup>TH</sup>  
GRADE 9:00-10:00 A.M.  
EACH SUNDAY**

**WE'LL TAKE CARE OF BREAKFAST!**

**APRIL 5- EASTER SUNDAY- SPECIAL  
ACTIVITIES AND EGG HUNT FOR ALL  
KIDS AND YOUTH**



**MORE DETAILS COMING SOON!!!**

**VACATION BIBLE  
SCHOOL 2026**

**JULY 14 & 15TH**

# Outreach & Advocacy Ministry Team



Thank you to all who continue to volunteer for Alpha Hart Lewis Elementary School this year in different capacities (Pastor Rick, Jolene Kirchhoff, Sharon & Mike Rapp, Mona Dachroeden, Melba Shaffer, Mahree Skala). Jolene K. and Llona W. attended the Partner in Education Celebration breakfast on March 13 and watched an AHL 5<sup>th</sup> grader perform in "The High Steppers" for the event entertainment. Fantastic! There is so much wonderful support in our community for Columbia Public Schools and our students of all abilities.

April 8 is AHL's PTA meeting where we can provide child care at 6:00 p.m., and April 15 at 7:00 a.m. is Good Dads where we provide support and breakfast. During the week of April 20-24 is MAP testing for AHL students and we will have the shopping cart prior to then in our Gathering Area to collect snack donations for the students to help them through the days (granola, Goldfish, pretzels, Cheez-its, hard candy, mints). AHL is reading "Charlotte's Web" for their school One Read and they will celebrate what they read and learned with a movie night on Friday April 24 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. in the gym. CUCC has been invited to attend and bring your own chair/blanket, and AHL will provide popcorn and juice (let Llona know if you plan to attend so we can send AHL a count).

Teacher Appreciation Week is the week of May 4-7; CUCC plans to provide a homemade hot lunch for them at school one of those days. There will be a couple opportunities for CUCC volunteers in May: (1) Friday May 8 is their PBS (Positive Behavior Support) End of Year Celebration, where the students go during the day to the nearby park to play; and (2) May 8 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. is their PTA Carnival where CUCC can volunteer in their booths/games. The last day of school for CPS is May 21.



Food and gas costs continue to rise, so more and more people need to get food from the Food Bank so they can pay their other bills. Changes in federal and state rules will soon make it more difficult or impossible for many folks to continue receiving SNAP benefits. That's where we come in! Our labor helps Food Bank serve as many as possible. CUCC's April shift is on Tuesday, April 28 at 5:30 p.m. to sign up, [CLICK HERE](#). If you have questions or want more information, contact [Mahree Skala](#). Many thanks to the February volunteers who packaged bags of cinnamon Cheerios: Audrey Lasley, Brenda, John, Landon and Caleb Muench, Mahree Skala and Tricia Soncasie. It's fun and satisfying work.



The next Team Earth Lunch and Learn will be May 3 after church. Please plan to come for a good discussion, good food, and good company. We are moving toward development of a Climate Justice Covenant and your input is needed.

CUCC plans to have a table at this year's Earth Day celebration on Sunday afternoon, April 26. It's a great opportunity to make ourselves known at this very popular event, and to show our commitment to sustaining God's creation. If you would like to help staff the table for a couple of hours please contact [Mahree Skala](#).



The March 16 meal at Loaves and Fishes consisted of chicken and rice casserole (made and provided by Jolene Kirchhoff), vegetarian casserole, lettuce salad (provided by Patty Beeson), bread, various desserts (from Cliff Beckman's funeral luncheon and the Stewardship luncheon), plus a cake and brownies made by Mary Lorber, Connie Loveless, and Tricia Soncasie. THANK YOU to all who made contributions to the meal! Peanut butter and jelly's were made and provided by Mahree Skala. We served approximately 120 firsts and 52 seconds.

# Scouting America

Troop 4475 had a busy March! We started the month off celebrating Scout achievements at a joint Court of Honor with Troop 708. Troop 4475 had two rank advancements and 19 merit badges earned with several Climbing, Family Life, and Personal Fitness merit badges being awarded to Scouts. We were honored to participate in Scout Sunday at CUCC on March 8. Thank you to CUCC for being such a supportive chartered organization for our Troops and Pack! Our Troop celebrated its 6<sup>th</sup> birthday in March. We also celebrate Katie Burton for having served as Scoutmaster of Troop 4475 for 6 years! I, Rachel Redburn, now have the privilege of acting Scoutmaster for Troop 4475.

March 13-15 we camped at Rock Bridge State Park and enjoyed hikes and learning/ teaching camping skills. This was the first campout for our new Scouts who recently crossed over from Cub Scouts. They had the opportunity to learn knife and fire safety to earn their Totin' Chip and Firem'n Chit. They very quickly put their fire building skills to the test with an impressive campfire. Any good campfire should get to be accompanied by some songs and skits and the ladies of 4475 did not disappoint. On March 16, we held elections for Order of the Arrow (OA)- essentially a National Honor Society for Scouts offering additional service opportunities. Six Scouts were elected into OA and two adult leaders nominated. Now to enjoy Spring Break and then be fresh to start again in April!



708 had a great turnout for our March military campout. 30 scouts and 15 adults headed to Ft. Leonard Wood where we were guests of one of the Army's leadership schools. Scouts had a chance to get a glimpse of the military life, including time at their indoor range, lunch in the mess hall, and an obstacle course. It was finished off with an early morning wakeup and formation run led by our hosts.



Pack 5183 had our first outdoor pack meeting this year on March 9! We are so excited for warm weather and to resume our outdoor activities! Most of our Cub Scouts have met their yearly requirements which means we can focus on the electives! We have some hikes and a fishing day coming up soon. The Pack is planning our spring campout where we will go to Wonders of Wildlife for a lock-in mid-May. The Cubs are very excited to get to see the fish up close!

# THANK YOU!

It was so great to see you at the Diversity Breakfast! We so appreciate your faithful partnership and this latest \$800 gift. Your generosity helps us create many “firsts” for our neighbors who have lacked mentors and opportunities to achieve the skills and milestones associated with a successful life.



Here are some recent examples of “firsts” in the lives of our program participants:

- ⊗ A 21 year old woman with an abusive childhood and history of bouncing from relative to relative since age 12, has maintained her first apartment and job for the past 15 months. She wrote, “thank you so much for everything that you and everyone else has done for me. Without your guys help I don’t think my life would be in the same place it is now. Prior to entering the program, I didn’t have the best start in life nor was I excited to wake up every day and continue on. Now it’s changed so much. I find excitement in everything I do, and every waking moment is a blessing!”
- ⊗ An immigrant couple worked with us to purchase their first home through the Anderson Homes Foundation which provided immediate equity and an accessible design to accommodate their special needs. The husband said, “the collective support has had a profound impact on our lives. You have helped make our daily life much easier and, just as importantly, helped us establish a strong financial foundation. That kind of support and generosity means more to us than words can fully express.”
- ⊗ A 33 year old single mother was helped to get a drivers license for the first time. The very same week, she moved from a hotel where she had been staying for two years into an income-based apartment. She and our coaching team couldn’t stop ringing our Joy Bell!

You are making these “firsts” possible by your giving!

With love and appreciation for your generosity,  
Jane Williams, Executive Director

Thank you for your donation of \$1,550 to the United Church of Christ. You are part of the United Church of Christ, uniting with us to give everyone a voice and working with the Holy Spirit toward a just world for all. As you stand with us, we confront the injustices of our day. We offer extravagant welcome and radical hospitality to a world seeking lives of deeper meaning and greater value. Our churches are powerful in witness to Christ’s love for all people. Our witness matters in the world, and your witness matters in this world. With your generous gift, we can do this work.



Sincerely,  
Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson, General Minister and President



I wanted to personally thank you for your support of Habitat over the years. It was amazing to see all the community support for this event! You all are doing an incredible job of carrying the legacy of Uel Blank and other CUCC members who have supported Habitat for Humanity over the years. I was touched by the care you all put into your work at the breakfast. We appreciate the support of your group. If anyone is ever interested in getting involved further, we are always here! Thank you again for your contribution.

Abigail Burbridge, Communication Specialist and Resource Advocate

Thank you so much for your generous support! You are helping small holder farmers around the world grow lasting solutions to hunger and transform their communities. I would love to connect the next time I’m in the area! Thank you for all that you do.



Blessings,  
Kaylyn Morse, Regional Director

# Clean Up Columbia

**Saturday, April 11, 2026 | 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.**

It's time to clean up- let's show our respect for God's creation! The citywide "Clean Up Columbia" is the annual event to encourage people to help clean up our city.

At Columbia UCC, we are focusing on our outer road. Last year, we picked up 49 bags full!

Make sure to wear appropriate clothes and shoes. Cloth gloves, reflective vests, and bags will be provided. Please use the QR code or go to <https://tinyurl.com/CleanCUCC> to sign up.



# International Missions

## CUCC IS WORKING IN COSTA RICA

The Latin American Biblical University (Universidad Biblica Latinoamericana, UBL) in Costa Rica is an ecumenical and intercultural theological institution dedicated to preparing church leaders, pastors, and laypersons across Latin America and the Caribbean. Founded in 1922 as a women's Bible training school, it has evolved into a fully accredited university offering bachelor's, licentiate, and master's programs in Biblical sciences and theological studies. UBL emphasizes contextual theology; emerging issues like gender justice, ecology, social justice, and human rights; and blends classroom study with distance learning to reach students across many countries.

Through [Global Ministries](#), CUCC is a partner in mission with over 200 mission partners around the world, including the Universidad Biblica Latinoamericana. Keep Global Ministries and the people of Costa Rica in your prayers this month as they do God's work on our behalf!



## MISSION WITH CHIAPAS– IMMERSION EXPERIENCE OCTOBER 13-20, 2026

Churches of the Missouri Mid-South Conference have travelled to Chiapas six times in the past twelve years, working alongside the [Institute for Intercultural Studies and Research](#), one of our Global Ministries Mission partners in Chiapas. We have worked alongside them in towns and villages, learning about the people of Chiapas and the ways of life in the communities of Chiapas. We have also helped construct a new facility on the grounds at [The Institute](#), a facility that has more than tripled their institutional capacity and ability to do ministry with the people of their communities.

[The Institute](#) is not the only Global Ministries Mission partner in Chiapas. On our last trip, we had the opportunity to work with another one of our Mission Partners, [Melel Xojobal](#), an agency that works solely with children in need. [Melel Xojobal](#) means “True Light” in the indigenous Tzotzil language, and they focus on being a light of hope for children whose only other alternative is the dark of hopelessness.

**Our next “Mission Trip” to Chiapas will be the fall of 2026! We will leave St. Louis on October 13 and return on October 20.** While we are in Chiapas, we will spend most of our time in the city of [San Cristobal](#) working with [The Institute](#) and Melel Xojobal. We will have the opportunity to see several indigenous museums, including the Chocolate Museum, and immerse ourselves in the culture of Chiapas. We will spend time in the marketplaces and worship at an indigenous church. We will learn about the life and context of the Indigenous Mayan communities that make up Chiapas, and we will even do some work, but work is not the focus of the trip. Education and relationship are the focus. The work will be suited for all abilities; all are welcome to come along, from age 16 up to age 90+! (Due to the nature of the trip, we are not encouraging anyone under 16 to participate.)

The cost for this trip is \$1,600. This includes airfare, lodging for seven days and six nights, food for that timeframe, transportation to and from the airport in Tuxtla Gutierrez and other transportation, and other incidentals. All expenses are included in that price except souvenirs you may wish to buy. For a week-long mission trip, it is very economical. **Everyone who participates must have a current passport. It is also highly recommended that you have a current COVID vaccination.** We will schedule a forum in early February to discuss more details about the trip, for anyone who has questions.

**There is a limit of ten people for this trip – so make your commitment early!** Due to transportation issues, we cannot have more than this number. If you would like to go, talk to me ([Pastor Rick](#)). I have packets with detailed information and registration materials. Registrations and deposits must be turned in by June 1. Registration will include the completed registration form and a copy of your passport.

# On the Church Calendar in April

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>05 - EASTER</b> 6:30 a.m. - Sunrise Service 7:30 a.m. - Easter Breakfast 9:00 a.m. - Easter Activities 10:00 a.m. - Fellowship 10:30 a.m. - Worship	<b>06</b> 7:00 p.m. - Scouting America	<b>07</b> 10:00 a.m. - Quilters 5:30 p.m. - LODDO Literacy Night	<b>01</b> 6:00 p.m. - Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. - Celebration Singers 7:15 p.m. - Confirmation Class	<b>02 - MAUNDY THURSDAY</b> 12:15 p.m. - Worship 6:30 p.m. - Troop 4475 Meeting	<b>03 - GOOD FRIDAY</b> 7:00 p.m. - Worship	<b>04</b>
<b>12</b> 7:30 a.m. - Men's Fellowship 9:00 a.m. - Faith Education 10:00 a.m. - Fellowship 10:30 a.m. - Worship 12:00 p.m. - Team Earth	<b>13</b> 7:00 p.m. - Scouting America	<b>14</b> 10:00 a.m. - Quilters 5:30 p.m. - Finance & Stewardship Ministry 6:00 p.m. - Girl Scouts 6:30 p.m. - Troop 708	<b>08</b> 6:00 p.m. - Prayer Shawl 6:00 p.m. - Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. - Celebration Singers	<b>09</b> 9:30 a.m. - Women's Fellowship	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>19</b> 9:00 a.m. - Faith Education 10:00 a.m. - Fellowship 10:30 a.m. - Worship	<b>20</b> 4:30 p.m. - Loaves & Fishes 7:00 p.m. - Scouting America	<b>21</b> 10:00 a.m. - Quilters 10:00 a.m. - Staff Meeting 1:00 p.m. - Pause to Color 6:30 p.m. - Council Meeting	<b>22</b> 6:00 p.m. - Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. - Celebration Singers 7:15 p.m. - Confirmation Class	<b>16</b> 5:00 p.m. - Worship & Music Ministry Team 6:30 p.m. - Clergy Personnel Committee	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 9:00 a.m. - Western Association Spring Gathering
<b>26 - EARTH DAY</b> 9:00 a.m. - Faith Education 10:00 a.m. - Fellowship 10:30 a.m. - Worship	<b>27</b> 7:00 p.m. - Scouting America	<b>28</b> 10:00 a.m. - Quilters 10:00 a.m. - Staff Meeting 5:30 p.m. - Food Bank	<b>29</b> 6:00 p.m. - Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. - Celebration Singers 7:15 p.m. - Confirmation Class	<b>30</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 9:00 a.m. - GSMH STEM Day 2:00 p.m. - Quilts of Valor Ceremony

# The Communicator

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

3201 I-70 Dr. NW  
Columbia, MO 65202-3296  
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*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**

## 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!