

THE COMMUNICATOR

January 2024



From the Pastor's Keyboard...

"Where Do We Go From Here?"

The December Church Council meeting was the place for some great discussion about thinking "outside of the box" in congregational ministry. We have been reading a book by Bob Smietana titled, "Reorganized Religion – the Reshaping of the American Church and Why it Matters." This book discusses the changes we are seeing in worship and service post-pandemic; and reflects on why people are moving away from church toward more secular interests.

We are just getting to the good part -- "Where do we go from here?" We will be studying these final three chapters in the next few months as we prepare to ask ourselves as congregational leadership, "Where do we, CUCC, go from here?" One thing is for certain; we cannot keep doing things the way we have "always" been doing them. How our children "do church" will be very different than the way we have "always done church."

But the reality is, the church is always changing to reflect the spirituality of the times. Church today is very different than it was 40 years ago, back in the 1980s, and church in the 1980s was very different than church in the 1940s. If church is to be relevant and vital, it must always adapt with the times.

"God is Still Speaking . . ." What does this really mean? This tells us that God is speaking to us through the cultural context of our times. God is challenging us in ways that differ from previous generations; and that is wonderful. The church that is not of its current context is a church that is irrelevant. But the question still remains . . . where do we go from here?

It is noteworthy to mention that finances are a factor in this discernment process. We finished the 2022 fiscal year \$38,000 behind in Joyful Giving, and every indication at Communicator deadline is that we will finish 2023 about the same amount behind. Part of our discernment as Church leadership revolves around the fiscal question of how can we continue to support our current ministry programs with deficits such as this. "Passing the Plate" sustained the ministries of the church for many years, but will that be sufficient in the future?

Where do we go from here? Sustaining the church is not about simply propping up a declining institution. The church, in its purest sense, is about transforming the world. The church, when it is acting as a true church and not just a clubhouse, is the most effective means of doing Jesus' work in the world. Without the church, the hungry would not get fed, the thirsty would not get quenched, and the mighty would not get challenged. The church, speaking out for justice, changes the world. The loss of that would be monumental to our culture. As Bob Smietana writes in the aforementioned book, "*Churches are important; and the decline of organized religion will affect all of us, whether we are religious or not. A world without organized religion (the church) is not a better place.*"

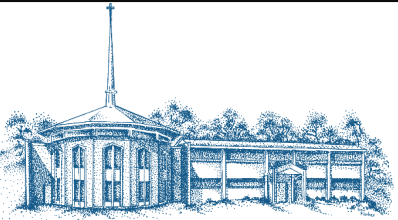
You will be hearing more from our CUCC Ministry Teams in 2024 about new ways to "be the church." We hope you will take all considerations into your heart and think about ways you can be the church in the world.

In the meantime, I would like to invite you to undertake several intentional practices, some "New Year Resolutions" if you will:

- Publicize our church on Facebook: "Share" (don't just "like") CUCC Facebook posts.
- Share our livestreamed worship services with friends; post them on social media.
- Invite a friend to worship, and to church dinners.
- Commit to being present in worship and other church activities.
- Come to a Bible Study or Book Study this Spring.
- Be open to "out of the box" thinking and share new ideas with church leadership.
- Share the Good News of Jesus Christ in your circle of friends.
- Pray for the ministries of this congregation.

-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

MJ King

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
9am- 3pm

Phone:
(573) 445-7931

Email:
office@columbiaucc.com

Website:
www.columbiaucc.com



Ladies - Mark Your Calendars!

Women's Fellowship will celebrate the New Year on Thursday, January 11. We will meet at 9:30 a.m. in the Gathering Area. We will have a great breakfast together, then participate in our Bible Study, and discuss our ministry work.

All meetings will be held the second Thursday of each month through May 9, 2024. Plan to attend for good food, good fellowship, and inspiration as we study *Sacred Encounters - The Power and Presence of Jesus*. All ladies are welcome! Come join us for food and fun and Bible Study!



CHILI WEATHER MEANS CHILI COOK-OFF!



The All-Church Chili Cook-off will be January 21 this year, again sponsored by the Men's Fellowship. There is a sign-up sheet in the gathering area. Please join us, and enter your best Chili! If you would rather bring a dessert, that would be great! Or, just come and eat and enjoy the best chili in Boone County! If you would consider being a judge, contact Doug Privitt.

SUNDAY MORNING SNOW POLICY

In case of inclement weather on Sunday mornings this winter, please keep an eye on the cancellations listed on KOMU and KMIZ Television stations, as well as the CUCC website and Facebook page.

If cancelling worship is in question, the Pastor, Moderator, and Vice Moderator will make that call by 7:00 a.m. on a Sunday morning. They will then notify the media, send out a mass email to the congregation, and put notice on the church's Facebook page and website. This information will be posted by 7:15.

If worship is cancelled at our facility, an abbreviated worship will be livestreamed on YouTube and Facebook, at least the scriptures, sermon, and prayers. The extent of what is livestreamed will depend on who can make it to church that morning. Please join with the congregation worshipping virtually as we livestream and join together in virtual community.

If worship is not cancelled, but you feel unsafe venturing out, please stay home. We will still be livestreaming every Sunday, so you can always enjoy worship from home. You can also view the worship at a time other than 10:30! Past worship services are all on our website.





January BIRTHDAYS



Brian Marcks 1/1
 Carol Duermeyer 1/3
 Mahree Skala 1/5
 Shelley Brandenburg 1/14
 Steve Devenney 1/15
 Joan Schmidt 1/16
 Judy Kaiser 1/17
 Donna Marsh 1/20
 Kalyn Brookshire 1/21
 Brandon Schoeneberg 1/22
 Jolene Hackman 1/26
 Sue Ann Schaefer 1/28

Eloy Montenegro 1/1
 Laura Gartner 1/3
 Blake Forward 1/7
 Sarah Smith 1/14
 Kristy Hayward 1/15
 Virginia Stone-Meyer 1/16
 Troy Bentlage 1/18
 Jessica Wolfe 1/20
 Brian Forward 1/22
 Seth Smith 1/22
 Dave Forward 1/27
 Jane Beckett 1/30

Kristi Saylor 1/1
 Fred Malicoat 1/4
 Hannah Duncan 1/11
 Lydia Whitacre 1/14
 Dennis Marienfeld 1/15
 Asa Zumwalt 1/16
 Makayla Smith 1/18
 Bret Arms 1/21
 Stephanie Hall 1/22
 Shirley Callahan 1/24
 Polly Fuller 1/28
 Alice Moon 1/31

Sunday Volunteer Schedule for January

Date	Greeters	Ushers	Worship Leaders	Tech Booth
1/7	Helen Schultz	Pat Forward & Llona Weiss	Danielle Dreier, Aidan Pierson, & Trevor Pierson	Lorry Dreier
1/14	Mary Lorber	Charlie Marcks	Lloyd Mickelson	Brent Marcks
1/21		Jim Loveless	Sue Ann Schaefer	Doug & Judi Privitt
1/28			Jim Loveless	

COLUMBIA UCC CHURCH COUNCIL

Moderator: Kurt Heine
Vice Moderator: Jerry Kiesling
Secretary: Alethea Tennill
Treasurer: Sue Ann Schaefer
Recording Treasurer: Christine Staelens
Building & Grounds: Ted Dachroeden
Fellowship & Hospitality: Mary Lorber-Solt
Finance & Stewardship: Keith Birkes
Inclusion & Affirmation: Tricia Price
Little One's Day Out: Lorry Dreier
Membership & Care: Judi Privitt
Nurture & Education: Pat Forward
Outreach & Advocacy: Mark Duncan
Worship & Music: Mike Pierson

heinekurt@gmail.com
rollzierp50@gmail.com
atennill108@gmail.com
ssas3307@aol.com
tigersfour@gmail.com
gpadoc4gd@gmail.com
eldercow@gmail.com
kbirkes4@gmail.com
tricialprice@gmail.com
llhd01@gmail.com
judiprivitt811@gmail.com
pdfoward@msn.com
markduncan2@mchsi.com
mike.pierson.1969@gmail.com



MODERATOR'S MOMENT

Advent has come and gone, though you wouldn't know it by the weather! With a high of 58 and rain (instead of snow!) on Christmas Day, it may not quite feel like Christmas outside, but that did not stop the folks at CUCC from making it feel like Christmas within our doors! The Christmas Cantata featured some fantastic music from our new coordinator Casey Wood and organist Stephen Jannetti, and we can't forget about our lovely choir, lifting us up with song. The banquet after was also a hit with much conversation and community consisting of longtime members and some new folks, too! Our Nurture and Education team with Linda Neale at the helm was hard at work coaching our fine youth through a very fun Christmas pageant; and Christmas Eve worship was spectacular. It's really great to see our youth getting a chance to be on the other side of the pulpit and gaining confidence on stage, well some of them (clears throat . . . Gus). Hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! It's an honor to be a part of such a vibrant, hard-working congregation.

-Kurt Heine, Moderator



FROM YOUR STUDENT PASTOR



Hello, Friends! I had intended to write about creation justice this month, but I keep getting called back to the idea of hope, so creation justice will need to wait one more month. But be on the lookout for plans that are underway to be in conversation about creation justice in 2024.

Hope, on one hand, is such an essential part of our faith. On the other hand, we use the word so casually: "I hope it doesn't rain," "I hope there are some cookies left," "I hope I'm not late for my appointment."

I don't necessarily believe that hope requires an object – like a sunny day, a cookie, and an on-time appointment. Rather, I believe that hope is an end unto itself – a gift of our faith. Our belief in God gives us hope that, no matter what pain, suffering, and grief that we suffer, in the end, the glory of God's kingdom outweighs temporal pain in ways we could never measure.

Still, we hope for good here on earth. We hope that humanity, and how we live in harmony with each other and with all of creation, arcs upward. But sometimes the arc looks really slow from our human perspective. In our personal lives, there are struggles, difficult relationships, difficulties brought on by our own imperfections and those of people with whom we interact. On a larger scale, there is strife in our own government. There is conflict in Israel and Palestine and war in Ukraine. All of this – and more – can make hope challenging.

Still, I believe our faith offers us the gift of hope. And we can choose hope – or not – over and over and over again throughout our lives. We can be the source of hope for others. When things around us look dark, we can choose to act in ways that bring a flicker of hope to people we encounter. Perhaps you've heard the saying, "We're all here to walk each other home." Being the source of hope along the way, through a show of kindness, generosity, or tenderness, is part of walking each other home. The good news is that the people of CUCC possess kindness, generosity, and tenderness in great quantities. You bring flickers of hope to people through VAC Christmas gifts, through ministry at the food pantry, Room at the Inn, and Alpha Hart Lewis Elementary. You bring hope to one another in so many ways. In these flickers of hope, you are incarnations of God's love. That's a really big deal.

I want to share with you a [YouTube video](#) that I watch when I need to have my own hope boosted. It's an event led by Koolulam, a social musical initiative aimed at empowering communities and strengthening the fabric of society. The event was held in Haifa, Israel in 2020. More than 3,000 people from various religions – Muslim, Jewish, Christian, and more – from many different countries came together, learned the song "One Day," which has a message of peace and love, and they performed it together. It's amazing. I have watched it several times since the October 7 attack in Israel. It feeds my soul and brings me hope that we can grow to live together as a peaceful world community.

I pray it does the same for you.

-Shelly Adams, Student Pastor



CUCC CHURCH COUNCIL

CUCC Council Meeting — November 21, 2023

Present: Kurt Heine, Jerry Kiesling, Christine Staelens, Ted Dachroeden, Mary Lorber-Solt, Keith Birkes, Tricia Price, Lorry Dreier, Judi Privitt, Pat Forward, Mark Duncan, Mike Pierson, Rick Oberle, and Alethea Tennill.

Jerry Kiesling discussed our book **Reorganized Religion**, Chapter 6: “The Land of Mini and Mega Churches.” We now have fewer Mega Churches. There is a net loss of 1/3 of the churches every year. A whopping 10% of churches now have 50% of the worshippers they previously had. Smaller churches have more intimacy, and the pastor is more accessible.

Unfinished Business:

- * Spots were filled for stewardship duties.
- * Worship Sanctuary Updates: Most things are completed. Still waiting on the drapes and the ribbing at the front of the altar.
- * Policy and Procedures Manual Update: Personnel Committee started the review this evening.
- * Clergy Personnel Committee/Annual Pastoral Review: The review is completed.
- * Vision Team: Looking to increase the collaboration among the ministry teams.
- * Inclusion Ramp for the Sanctuary: Tricia is still working on collecting all the information needed.
- * Server Update: New Server has been completed, and it went flawlessly.

New Business:

- * Pastor Rick’s laptop had some issues that have now been resolved.
- * A request to purchase a new keyboard was received from the worship committee. We received a bid of \$1,299.99. A stand or amplifier is not needed. The money will come from the Worship and Music Designated Fund. Moton passed.
- * Annual Reports are due December 31.
- * Annual Congregational Meeting is scheduled for May 19, 2024.
- * Financials were presented. We are under budget in Joyful Giving and over budget on expenses. Giving Tuesday is coming up. They hope to raise \$25,000 with 90% going toward Joyful Giving.

Ministry Reports:

- * Building and Grounds: Ted has worked on a gate in the LODO area and a door in the sanctuary.
- * Fellowship and Hospitality: Advent Banquet will be December 10 after the Cantata.
- * Finance and Stewardship: Giving Tuesday is November 28. They are promoting it through Facebook. We are giving 10% of money received to the Fisher House, which is associated with the VA Hospital.
- * Inclusion & Affirmation: June 1 and 2, the choir from Kansas City will be here.
- * LODO: Lorry Dreier stated that enrollment is down.
- * Membership & Care: They will be calling inactive members and working on a Handy Helpful Ministry Team.
- * Nurture & Education: November 19 was Pajama and Gingerbread Decorating Sunday. The Advent postcard went out today. We plan on contacting youth and children to encourage more attendance. There will be a special Sunday once a month. Cookies by the Pound will be December 10. Linda Hayward is running the children’s program December 17.
- * Outreach & Advocacy: Mark Duncan stated the drive for VAC’s last day to bring items is December 3. Christmas eve offering will go toward RIP Medical Debt.
- * Worship & Music: Mike Pierson announced the Hanging of the Greens will be December 2 at 9:00 a.m. They are working on the section leader contract.



Respectfully submitted,
Alethea Tennill, Secretary

FELLOWSHIP & HOSPITALITY MINISTRY TEAM

By the time everyone reads this, presents will have been opened, friends and family will have gathered together to celebrate the joy of the season, and decorations may or may not be put away for another year, and you are thinking ‘ugh’ because now there is only the blariness/dreariness of January/February in Missouri.

Fear not! Fastnacht will soon be here! Something to look forward to: we will be celebrating Fat Tuesday German style, on February 13, 2024! Hopefully we will have live music (still working on that), the duck dance, brats, German potato salad, fun, food, friends, and family! We had such a great turnout for the Christmas Advent Banquet and Choral Cantata (served 130 plates), so let’s see if we can’t make Fastnacht even better!

The next meeting for Fastnacht preparation will be on January 23 at 6:30 p.m. I will be placing sign-up sheets for the many volunteers needed to make this the best night ever! Thank you to everyone for all of the help in setting up/tearing down and food prep for the Advent Banquet; many hands make light work. May the New Year find you peace, good health, wisdom, and wealth. Please contact me if you have any suggestions, questions, or concerns on how we can make your church experience the best!



Sincerely,
Mary Lorber, Chair of Fellowship & Hospitality Ministry Team

COMO VALUES DIVERSITY CELEBRATION – JANUARY 24

The 31st Annual COMO Values Diversity Celebration will be held January 24, 2023 at 7:00 a.m. in the Holiday Inn Expo center. As we do every year, CUCC has purchased a table. If you are interested in joining us at the table, talk to Tricia Price or Pastor Rick!



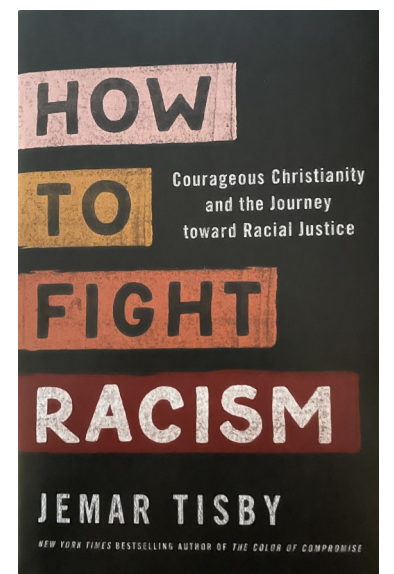
The program will feature performances by Chris Stephens, Jabberwocky Dance Studio, Columbia Community Gospel Choir, Compass Church’s Intergenerational Rock Band, and Morgan Matsiga. The event program will also include CPS student writings and a student video, an update on the Columbia City Journey Toward Excellence program, and presentation of the annual Columbia Values Diversity Awards. Breakfast will be served promptly at 7:00.

This event is always a wonderful way to celebrate the legacy of Dr. King. We hope you will join us!

BOOK STUDY WITH PASTOR RICK– JANUARY/FEBRUARY

Book Study: In recognition of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday and Black History Month, we will be studying the acclaimed book, “How to Fight Racism” by Jamar Tisby. We will study this book four Thursday evenings at 6:30 p.m. in January/February, starting January 18. This book is about taking a stand for justice in our world today by confronting racial injustice. It is unapologetically Christian; the subtitle is, “Courageous Christianity and the Journey toward Racial Justice.” The author speaks to this in the first chapter as he writes, “*Christianity provides a transcendent narrative for why racial justice is important. Christianity teaches that all people are made in the image of God. Their physical appearance, including skin color, are part of bearing God’s image and should be respected as such.*”

Copies of the book are available in the church office; pick up yours today and read ahead! If you have any questions, talk to Pastor Rick.





Finance & Stewardship Ministry Team



In 2023, the church asked for financial help to renovate the Sanctuary, and we responded above and beyond what was needed. This is greatly appreciated! We celebrated 100 years as a congregation! It was an amazing year!

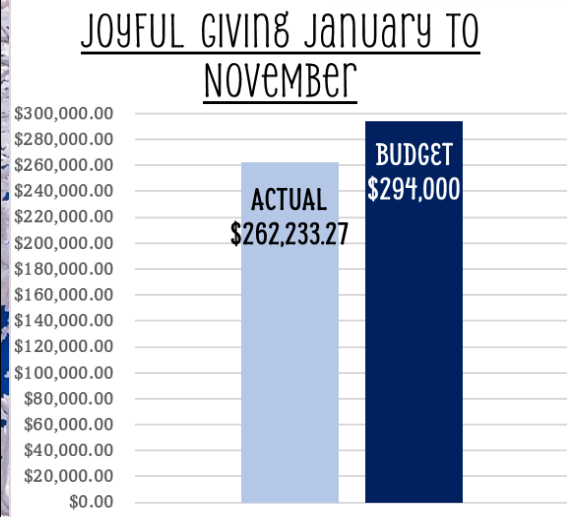
While that is a great accomplishment, it doesn't happen without financial support. Giving to special projects, such as Sanctuary renovation, has to go hand in hand with support of our Annual Budget (Joyful Giving). As of Communicator deadline, our Joyful Giving support is way down. In order to continue to do the good work we do, we have to be as faithful with this as we are with special projects.

As we start the New Year and are deciding how much to give the church, we hope you will be as generous as you can. The church needs your support to continue with our current ministries. Thank You in advance!

Respectfully Submitted,
Doug Privitt,
Finance & Stewardship Team Member



Financial Update			
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	Over/(Under)
NOVEMBER INCOME	\$28,105.69	\$33,183.33	(\$5,077.64)
NOVEMBER EXPENSES	\$31,419.39	\$29,874.07	\$1,545.32
YTD INCOME	\$271,846.03	\$301,316.63	(\$29,470.60)
YTD EXPENSES	\$369,536.27	\$351,869.51	\$17,666.76
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	(\$97,690.24)	(\$50,552.88)	(\$47,137.36)
NOVEMBER JOYFUL GIVING	\$27,250.69	\$32,500.00	(\$5,249.31)
YTD JOYFUL GIVING	\$262,233.27	\$294,000.00	(\$31,766.73)



Date	11/5/23	11/12/23	11/19/23	11/26/23	Total
Attendance	110	91	104	71	376

CUCC ONLINE GIVING

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

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

1. Click on this link (or type into your web browser): <https://www.kindridgiving.com/app/giving/cucc>
2. Access the Kindrid giving site through our CUCC website: www.columbiaucc.com 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.

INCLUSION AND AFFIRMATION MINISTRY TEAM

THE FOLLOWING LYRICS ARE FROM AN 1894 HYMN BY ARTHUR CAMPBELL AINGER.
GOD IS WORKING THIS PURPOSE OUT

God is working this purpose out,
as year succeeds to year;
God is working this purpose out,
and the time is drawing near;
nearer and nearer draws the time,
the time that shall surely be:
when the earth shall be filled
with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.

From utmost east to utmost west,
where human feet have trod,
by the mouth of many messengers
goes forth the voice of God:
“Give ear to me, ye continents,
ye isles, give ear to me,
that the earth may be filled
with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.”

Let us go forth in the strength of God,
with the banner of Christ unfurled,
that the light of the glorious gospel of truth
may shine throughout the world.
Let us all fight both sorrow and sin
to set the captives free,
that the earth may be filled
with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.

All we can do is nothing worth
unless God blesses the deed.
Together we hope for the harvest-tide
when God gives life to the seed.
Nearer and nearer draws the time,
the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled
with the glory of God
As the waters cover the sea.

BLESSINGS TO ALL FOR 2024 FROM THE OPEN AND AFFIRMING MINISTRY TEAM

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.



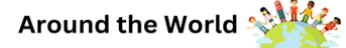
LODO MINISTRY TEAM



"LET THIS year BE THE year YOU go AFTER PROGRESS OVER PERFECTION AND SAVOR EVERY VICTORY YOU MAKE ALONG THE WAY TO YOUR GOALS."

LODO wrapped up 2023 with celebrating Christmas and praising the baby Jesus at our annual Christmas program. LODO families filled the CUCC Sanctuary to standing room only capacity to support our students as they performed on Thursday, December 14. Many thanks to Pastor Rick for leading us in prayer and to Judi Privitt for running the sound booth!

January Learning Themes



The Importance of Building Social/Emotional Skills in Young Children

Parenting and caring for young can often feel overwhelming. Children have **BIG** emotions and have yet to build the skills necessary to control their behaviors when they feel a lack of control over their bodies. Acknowledging the feelings and emotions of toddlers and preschoolers is imperative to their social/emotional growth. Emotional learning occurs through play, crafts, songs, and books. Children can best be supported by giving them time to move and play.

A first step in building social/emotional skills is to help children recognize and identify what they are feeling, and then validating their feelings. Many young children are unable to identify their feelings, but using a visual Emotions Chart will allow you to work with your child to match their feeling to the pictures. This opens up the opportunity to further talk about why a child feels that way and what may help them to feel happy/safe/calm. There are many Emotion Charts available with a quick internet search. At LODO, we utilize the chart that can be found at the following link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/12Qlur5EnbzWOa4UB3UhX_JtWPIorNp2Z/view?usp=sharing

When faced with strong emotions/behaviors, the best thing you can do is to share your calm. Breathing exercises can help children and adults reach the level of calm required to talk through an undesired behavior. Many breathing exercises can be found with an internet search, and there will be some trial and error in finding the breathing exercises that work best for your individual child. Here are a few of the many breathing exercises we practice at LODO.

S.T.A.R/Balloon/Pretzel/Drain/Bunny Breaths

https://drive.google.com/file/d/13k9z9xj01bHoi39EicfTRbd_BPkxJFjq/view?usp=drive_link

Calm Down with Take 5 Breathing

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3ondZPpW1RRc2IzckQxclZSRzg/view?usp=drive_link&resourcekey=0-MolHbENwXY1M_tPFBkixPQ

In our busy lives it can be hard to slow down and take time to work through strong emotions with our children. When we take the time to help children understand the feelings that they are experiencing, validate their feelings, and teach them approaches to managing their emotions, children will build the skills necessary to self-regulate their emotions as they grow.



In Love and Laughter,
Erika Maltsbarger

LODO will be closed through January 2 for Christmas Break. We return on Wednesday, January 3 and will review school expectations to jump right back into learning.



LODO MINISTRY TEAM



Many books have been written to help young children learn about and regulate their emotions. Here is a list of just some of the books we love to read at LODO to help build social/emotional skills.

- * **Amazing Feelings** (Board Book)
- * **The Very Hungry Worry Monsters**
by Rosi Greening
- * **Worries Are Not Forever** by Elizabeth Verdick
- * **Grumpy Pants** by Claire Messer
- * **The Boy with Big, Big, Feelings**
by Britney Winn Lee
- * **Roaring Mad Riley** by Allison Szczecinski
- * **The Worrysaurus** by Rachel Bright
- * **Feeling Angry!** by Katie Douglass
- * **Feeling Shy!** by Kay Barnham
- * **Feeling Worried!** by Kay Barnham
- * **Feeling Jealous!** by Kay Barnham
- * **Feeling Scared!** by Kay Barnham
- * **Feeling Sad!** by Kay Barnham
- * **Bunny Breaths** by David Milgrim
- * **Alphabreaths: The ABCs of Mindful Breathing**
by Christopher Willard & Daniel Rechtschaffen
- * **Peaceful Like a Panda**
by Kira Willey & Anne Betts
- * **Breathe Like a Bear** by Kira Willey & Anne Betts
- * **Hot Cocoa Calm** by Kira Willey & Anne Betts
- * **Pause Power** by Jennifer Law and Brian Martin
- * **Listening to My Body** by Gabi Garcia



NURTURE & EDUCATION MINISTRY TEAM



Sunday School - 9:00-10:00 a.m. – Sunday Mornings - There are classes for all ages.

Pre-K through High School – We are using Mini Revolutions curriculum to engage our young children and youth in learning.

Adult Bible Study – The Adult Bible Study class starts with the lectionary text for the Sunday Service. We may explore the text for the entire class or it may just be the starting point for wherever our thoughts take us. Come explore with us.

Nursery – Laynee, our Nursery Supervisor, is in the nursery every Sunday starting at 10:00 a.m. until the end of Worship. The nursery welcomes all children ages Kindergarten and younger.

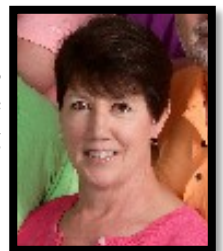
Confirmation Congratulations to Sofia Marienfeld-Crenshaw, who was confirmed on Sunday, December 3.

Special Event Sundays Coming Up! Please bring your children and youth for these Special Days:

- January 7, 2024 – Epiphany Sunday
- February 11, 2024 – Valentine’s Day Celebration
- March 14, 2024 – St. Patrick’s Day Celebration

Thank you for the support for the Cookies by the Pound Fundraiser that was held on Sunday, December 10, 2023, starting at 9:00 a.m. in the Gathering Area. Thank you to Lorry Dreier for her leadership and organization for this event and to Gina Pierson for her assistance with the cookie packaging. We raised over \$800 for the Nurture and Education Designated Fund. Thank you to everyone who brought cookies and to everyone who purchased them.

Thank you to Linda Neale for her leadership of this year’s Children’s Christmas Program, “Broadcasting Christmas,” during worship on Sunday, December 17, 2023. The children did a wonderful job! Thank you to Paula Wilson for costumes, Kurt Heine for helping with the children on stage, and Men’s Fellowship for the yummy treat bags.



Submitted by Pat Forward, Nurture & Education Ministry Team Chair

STAR SUNDAY

at CUCC

Sunday
January
7th

Happy Epiphany

During
Sunday
School



Games, Activities, Snacks
celebrating Epiphany
for youth of ALL ages

MEMBERSHIP and Care MINISTRY TEAM

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!!

Welcome to **Deborah Long Birkes**. Deborah is the wife of Keith Birkes. Her hometown is Sudbury, MS, but she has lived in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Arkansas, and now Missouri. Deborah is retired but previously worked as a Professor and Dean at Elon University in Elon, North Carolina. Deborah has 3 children, 3 step-children, 5 grandchildren, 7 step-grandchildren, and two step-great-grandchildren. Deborah enjoys hiking, biking (with Keith of course), cross country skiing, playing the flute, knitting, reading, spending time with family and friends, and traveling. She really enjoys a good road trip!!!



Welcome to **Sofia Marienfeld-Crenshaw**. Sofia was confirmed and welcomed into our congregation in December. She is the daughter of Katie Marienfeld and Ben Crenshaw and sister to Maia. She moved to Columbia when she was 4 years old. Her first four years were spent in Shawano, Wisconsin. Currently, Sofia is an 8th-grade student at Jefferson Middle School. She loves Irish Dance, kayaking, eating popcorn (perhaps while watching her favorite movie Home Alone), animals, and travel.

Church Directory Update - The church directory is in the pre-production phase, and it should be ready for distribution in the next month or so. We'll be sure to let you know when they're ready for distribution.

HEALTH MINISTRY CARE TEAM UPDATE

We had 26 people attend our Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Lunch and Learn in November. As a result, 18 signed up for the class which runs 1/7-2/25 from 12:00-2:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall (except January 21 where the time will be 1-3 p.m. after our Chili Cook-Off). Those attending should have received an email from Terry Wilson, M.ED., RN, our instructor, with details on the class and payment. Feel free to bring a brown bag lunch, and we can eat together before class starts. Contact **Anne Heine** if you have any questions. Looking forward to learning how to be more mindful in all aspects for life. Take a deep cleansing breath and let your stress go. Here's to enjoying a life of peace, joy, hope, and love in a calm and grateful manner. Blessings to you and yours as we begin this New Year!

Our team is here for you, so call us if we can help you with any health care related issues – transportation to appointments, questions, or concerns. If you want to be on our team, we'd love to have you, so let Anne Heine (chair) know, and we'll be in touch.

Your Health Ministry Team: Anne Heine, Mona Dachroeden, Mary Lorber-Solt, Emmalee Heine, Stephanie Zimny.



EAT WITH EIGHT UPDATE

Schedules and contact information of participants will be sent out via email from the church office at the beginning of January, along with directions on how it works. The person in the number one spot each month (the host) is in charge of contacting the group with the plan of where to meet (their home or restaurant) and any other details for the get-together. Hosts, please contact your group as soon as you can to set up the date so you have it on your calendar. It's a fun way to get to know each other while enjoying delicious food and good conversation. I hope you enjoy it as much as I and others have (as Pastor Rick wholeheartedly testified)!

If you still want to participate and didn't sign up, we'd welcome you to participate! Contact **Anne Heine** to be put on the list and for any questions. Bon Appetit!

-Anne Heine & Your Membership Care Team



WORSHIP & MUSIC MINISTRY TEAM



GIFTS OF THE MAGI COLLECTION EPIPHANY SUNDAY, JANUARY 7

On Sunday, January 7 (Epiphany Sunday), we will celebrate the offering of the Magi to the infant Jesus by bringing our own gifts as well. Please bring hygiene items (Soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste and toothbrushes) that Sunday and lay them at the foot of the manger. The Magi will proceed in at the beginning of the service bringing hygiene gifts, as well.

These gifts will be shared with our mission partners, including Alpha Hart Lewis Elementary School who would especially appreciate donations of boy's deodorant and ChapStick. We hope to see you here in worship on January 7 as we share communion together and bring our "Magi Gifts" to lay at Jesus' feet.

FROM YOUR MUSIC COORDINATOR

Hello all. At each worship service in December, Pastor Rick has spoken about joy. I have been thinking about joy in my life, as well. Working as the music coordinator of CUCC has certainly been a source of joy.

It is always a wonderful experience to meet with people who have a shared interest in the creation of music. That common interest has allowed us to build relationships with each other and create a beautiful product together. I hope that as we've performed each week, we've been able to create a space where you too can feel joy.

The Choir and the Bell Choir will resume rehearsals on Wednesday, January 3 to prepare for the new music season. I will be back home for the holiday break, but Mike Pierson will be filling in for a few weeks. Thank you to Mike for doing this! If you are interested in joining one of our choirs, or even singing/playing on a certain Sunday, talk to me or send me an email!

Blessings to you this Epiphany Season!

-Casey Wood,
CUCC Music Coordinator

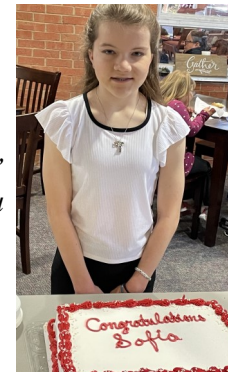


CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2023 CONFIRMAND – SOFIA MARIENFELD-CRENSHAW!

Congratulations to Sofia Marienfeld-Crenshaw, who was confirmed at CUCC on December 3, 2023! Sofia was the solo member of this year's class, but she made the journey along with several others who helped along the way. Many thanks to Danielle Dreier, Aidan Pierson, and Trevor Pierson who made the journey with her! Sofia's confirmation scripture is:

"But someone will say, 'You have faith; I have deeds.' Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds." - James 2:18

Sofia also joined the church that day, becoming our newest member, along with Deborah Birkes, who also joined. Congratulations to Sofia!



INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

CUCC IS WORKING IN FIJI

The Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) in Fiji is an ecumenical organization representing Christian denominations across the Pacific region. The PCC fosters cooperation and dialogue among diverse Christian communities across the Pacific. Advocating for social justice, human rights, and environmental sustainability, the PCC addresses pressing issues like climate change and regional conflicts. The PCC's impact reaches beyond religious boundaries by engaging in humanitarian efforts, disaster response, and empowerment programs for religious communities. Through the collective efforts of its member churches, the PCC is promoting peace, equality, and holistic well-being in the Pacific region.

Through **Global Ministries**, CUCC is a partner in mission with the Pacific Conference of Churches in Fiji (PCC), and through them, we are actively working in many Christian communities in the Pacific. In this New Year, please keep Global Ministries, the PCC, and the people of Fiji in your prayers!



DSPR UPDATE FROM GAZA

The Department of Service for Palestinian Refugees (DSPR) of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), one of our Global Missions Partners, has provided this update about their ministry in Gaza

The situation continues to be very dangerous and catastrophic; the airstrikes and artillery bombardment of buildings, institutions, and residential locations are intense, stronger, and nonstop. It's creating more damage and forcibly displacing more people to the south, while the south became a target for increasing attacks and invasion for the last 3 days! This has also severely affected our staff and premises. Unfortunately, our medical center in the Al-Daraj area has been bombarded and leveled to the ground, and the primary health care clinics, the pharmacy, the optical and the dental clinics, and the psycho-social unit do not exist anymore. Nevertheless, our staff is proceeding in response to the huge needs and to reduce the pain and suffering of the people in Gaza. We are proud of them. We believe that they are real heroes. They are standing for care and support, working days and nights while trying to take care of their family members and themselves. Below is a summary of our work in Gaza that our colleagues are conducting under fire:

- We are working with the forcibly displaced people in the south of the Gaza Strip, especially children and mothers, to help alleviate the psychological pressure they have as a result of the traumatic experiences and to reduce the possible development of this into a psychological illness.
- We are conducting sessions in psychological First Aid to train groups of people to be helpers and reduce panic in emergencies, which is always there.
- We are distributing hygiene kits to help raise the level of hygiene and cleanness and reduce the spread of communicable diseases.
- We are organizing health awareness days for groups of mothers to achieve better health and nutrition behaviors.
- We are receiving the people in our Clinic for primary health care services, including offering some medicine and health supplies.
- We are offering unrestricted cash distributions to 620 households, \$100-200 USD, through the system we organized with the Bank of Palestine, which will check the eligibility and send the money to individuals.
- Most of the 800 Christian Community members remain in the two Churches. We managed to bring them food and some basic supplies during the pause. They are in dire need of medicine for specific cases, and we are trying our best, but with little success. The invasion now is very close to the Christian churches.

Please continue to keep the people in Gaza and the work of the DSPR-MECC in your prayers in the New Year. The violence continues, and their work is far from over!

OUTREACH & ADVOCACY MINISTRY TEAM

ALPHA HART LEWIS ELEMENTARY UPDATE

Once again, CUCC, **Thank You** for your support for our Partnership Friend, Alpha Hart Lewis Elementary School (AHL)! Another wonderful article appeared in the Columbia Missourian about AHL on December 7, 2023 regarding their recent program, entitled "Guys with Ties." Several 5th grade boys wear ties to distinguish them for being in the program which helps develop positive leadership skills, empowers them to make good decisions, and teaches them about consequences.

Pastor Rick and I met with the AHL administration on December 11 and noted the following. Please mark your calendars for the various support opportunities:

Some of AHL's ongoing needs for students are socks and undies, boys and girls size 6-8 and 10-12 and boys sweatpants size 10-12. AHL also notified CUCC of one family who "fell through the cracks" and still had needs for the Holiday, and we/CUCC provided "Christmas" for that family in the same way we supported those families through the Voluntary Action Center (VAC) program.

AHL noted upcoming school events, inviting CUCC and volunteers (call AHL Office ahead to notify if someone plans to attend):

- **1-12-2024** Fancy Lunch with School Board President, playing music 10:10 a.m. - 2:10 p.m.
- **1-23-2024** Multi-Cultural Day all day featuring art, food, and music from other countries.
- **2-26-2024 Week** "Stock the Lounge" for Parent-Teacher Conferences. CUCC provides foodstuffs.
- **4-15-2024 Week** Provide snacks for students during MAP Testing week of April 22. CUCC can bring individual packages of goldfish, fruit snacks, granola, and mints (**no dairy & no peanuts**).
- **5-6-2024 Week** Teacher Appreciation Week; Dr. Minear will let CUCC know how we might support.
- **5-10-2024** Carnival (this year on Friday evening) from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.. CUCC volunteers requested.
- **5-14-2024** 5th grade field trip to BizTown - Junior Achievement in St. Louis (chaperones needed).

Also, it was mentioned about an opportunity for **volunteers to help coach** during the Home School Coordinators Basketball games/teams around March 2024. This requires an interview and background check.

Dr. Minear and Pastor Rick discussed staff changes, AHL's new Music Teacher, Mr. Silvey, and CUCC's new Music Coordinator, Mr. Casey Wood. We hope they can meet each other, but they may not be able to do a joint music event this year with both of them having a lot of work this year, in their new positions.

Friends, just let me know if you have donations for AHL, which I am happy to deliver, or if you are interested in any of AHL events and need more information. Thank you, CUCC!

Llona Weiss,
Liaison for CUCC to AHL, our Partnership Friend



Thank You for Sponsoring VAC Christmas Participants

Thanks to the generous folks of CUCC, we helped more than 40 people have a Merry Christmas. Not only did we meet the goals for gifts and money for 13 families and households, but we were able to donate an additional \$543, so six more people with no sponsors could receive gift cards from VAC. You have blessed many lives, and they know that someone cares!

-Mahree Skala, Outreach & Advocacy Ministry Team Member



THANK YOU!

LOAVES & FISHES

The 12/18/23 meal at Loaves & Fishes consisted of turkey tetrazzini (made with the leftover turkey from the Christmas banquet), ham, green beans, macaroni and cheese, roasted potatoes, and rolls, which was all food leftover from the banquet. We also served spaghetti, lettuce salad (provided by Pastor Rick and Patty Beeson), and a variety of pies and cookies. PB&J's were made and provided by Mahree Skala. Servers for the evening were Patty Beeson, Judi & Doug Privitt,

Anne Heine, Tom Solt & Mary Lorber-Solt, Debby (Mary's sister), Jim Loveless, and Keith & Deborah Birkes. We gave out approximately 153 servings. Many thanks to the wonderful volunteers!!

Blessings to all!

-Audrey Lasley



Mark Your Calendars for the January 23 Food Bank Shift

January is a long month for many in our community. The financial burdens of the holidays and winter utility bills mean that more people must rely on donated food to make ends meet. Our next opportunity to help package food will be on January 23 at 5:30 p.m. at the Food Bank on Vandiver Drive.

Many thanks to those who helped in November — Ted and Mona Dachroeden, Jo Ellen Grace, Connie Loveless, Mahree Skala, and Tricia Soncasie.

[CLICK HERE](#) to sign up for January or contact [Mahree Skala!](#)

Many, Many THANKS, GRATITUDE, AND APPRECIATION FOR THE CARING LOVE, HUGS, AND CONCERN FOR ME DURING MY TIME OF LOSS. I FEEL LARRY IS GRATEFUL ALSO FROM HIS HEAVENLY HOME. WHAT A BLESSING MY FRIENDS ARE AT CUCC.

-Donna Marsh

Thank you for your generous donation of \$1,500 to VAC! Your kindness is truly appreciated and noticed! Your gift will make an immediate impact on the lives of those we serve daily through our Faith in Service to Humanity (FISH) Fund.

Responding to immediate basic needs of individuals and families within our community is VAC's mission, and your support strengthens VAC's ability to continue the meaningful work we are so passionate about - helping our community thrive!

In 2022, VAC's FISH Fund served 1,347 unduplicated individuals and 1,209 unduplicated households in Boone County. From January through September 2023, \$64,800.85 in FISH Funds helped 1,274 individuals and 1,172 households.

Thank you again for supporting VAC's FISH Fund! Your contribution means so much to the individuals and families of Boone County, our agency, and staff. Your gift makes an immediate impact on the lives of those we serve.

With Gratitude,
Stacie Pottinger, Chief
Development Officer



Thank You!

To the members of

Columbia UCC, Columbia MO

for being a 5 for 5 Congregation of the United Church of Christ in 2022 .

5 for 5 Congregations support Our Church's Wider Mission Basic Support and the Neighbors in Need, One Great Hour of Sharing, The Christmas Fund, and Strengthen the Church Special Mission Offerings of the United Church of Christ.

Johann C. Dorfauer
General Minister and President
United Church of Christ

Joseph W. Nelson
Conference Minister



COLUMBIA UCC,
THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE COLUMBIA CROP HUNGER WALK! BECAUSE OF YOU, LIVES ARE BEING CHANGED FOR THE BETTER ALL AROUND THE WORLD!
MAY YOUR COMMUNITY'S HEART BE FILLED WITH HOPE THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON, JUST AS YOU HAVE GIVEN HOPE TO SO MANY!



Merry CHRISTMAS,
TIFFANY DETIENNE, CWS

ON THE CHURCH CALENDAR IN JANUARY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	LODO Off - Christmas Break					
	Church Office Closed		6:00 p.m. Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. Celebration Singers			
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Sunday School Party						
9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Fellowship 10:30 a.m. Worship	6:00 p.m. Girl Scouts in Fellowship Hall 6:30 p.m. Worship & Music Ministry Team Meeting	10:00 a.m. Quilters 10:30 a.m. Staff Meeting 5:00 p.m. Membership & Care Ministry Team Meeting	6:00 p.m. Chapel Ringers 6:00 p.m. Prayer Shawl 7:00 p.m. Celebration Singers	9:30 a.m. Women's Fellowship 5:00 p.m. Coyote Hill Foster Support Group in Fellowship Hall		
<i>*Worship Livestreaming on our CUCC Website</i>						
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Fellowship 10:30 a.m. Worship 3:00 p.m. Cub Scouts in FH	Church Office Closed		10:00 a.m. Pastor Rick leads worship at the Bluffs 6:00 p.m. Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. Celebration Singers	6:30 p.m. Book Study with Pastor Rick "How to Fight Racism" by Jemar Tisby		
<i>*Worship Livestreaming on our CUCC Website</i>						
24	22	23	24	25	26	27
Chili Cook-Off						
9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Fellowship 10:30 a.m. Worship 12:00 p.m. Chili Cook-Off	6:30 p.m. Nurture & Education Ministry Team Meeting	10:00 a.m. Quilters 10:30 a.m. Staff Meeting 5:30 p.m. Food Bank 6:30 p.m. Fellowship & Hospitality Ministry Team Meeting	7:00 a.m. COMO Values Diversity Breakfast 6:00 p.m. Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. Celebration Singers	6:30 p.m. Book Study with Pastor Rick "How to Fight Racism" by Jemar Tisby		
<i>*Worship Livestreaming on our CUCC Website</i>						
29	29	30	31	1	2	3
INCLUSION COVENANT						
9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Fellowship 10:30 a.m. Worship	6:30 p.m. Clergy Personnel Committee Meeting	10:00 a.m. Quilters 10:30 a.m. Staff Meeting	6:00 p.m. Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. Celebration Singers			
<i>*Worship Livestreaming on our CUCC Website</i>						

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



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ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

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



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

**Become
Part of
Our
Church
Family**

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

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

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

You are welcome here!

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

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

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